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TRANSLATIONS
OF
ANCIENT ARABIAN POETRY.

By the Same Author

THE DĪWĀNS OF 'ABĪD IBN AL-ABRAS
AND 'ĀMIR IBN AT-TUFAIL
Edited with translations and notes
E. J. W. Gibbs Memorial Trust 1913

THE MUFADDALIYĀT
An Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes
Edited with translations and notes
The Clarendon Press 1918

THE POEMS OF 'AMR SON OF QAMI'AH
Edited and translated
The Cambridge University Press 1919

TRANSLATIONS OF
ANCIENT ARABIAN POETRY
CHIEFLY PRE-ISLAMIC
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
CHARLES JAMES LYALL
M.A., M.C.S.I., C.I.E., BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE
FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

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1930

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Wa'inna 'ash'ara baitin 'anta ká'iluhú
haitun yukálu 'idhá 'anshadtahú—Sadaká

Of all the verses thou hast made the fairest in praise
is that whereof, when they hear, men say—'Yea, that is the Truth !'

ZUHAIR.

"

وَإِنَّ أَسْعَرَ بَيْتٍ أَنْتَ تَالُهُ .
بَيْتٌ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَشَدَتِ الْأَرْضَ حَرَقَ .
زَهَارٌ .

TO
WHITLEY STOKES
HON. D C.L. OXON , CORRESPONDING MEMBER
OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE
IN MEMORY OF THE DAYS WHEN
THIS BOOK WAS BEGUN
SIMLA 1877

FOREWORD

IN reprinting Sir Charles Lyall's translations of ancient Arabian Poetry, the publishers and family of the author have been actuated by a desire to bring before the public a book which shall be appreciated for its beauty, as well as valued for its worth as an historical document. At this time when the Arabs occupy such an important place in world politics, it is interesting to notice how their racial characteristics have persisted through the centuries their love for their horses and camels, their incorrigible habit of raiding and utter indifference to so-called civilising influences. They are nomads and fighters by instinct and inclination—real children of the Desert. The poems in this volume will remind readers of the great Hebrew poems, so familiar to them in the Old Testament—the Song of Deborah and the Song of Solomon. They differ fundamentally from the soft and sensuous verse of Omar Khayyam, beautiful as it is. The books written about the exploits of the Arabs during the Great War, have familiarised the public with their ways of speech, their courtesies and their customs. It is hoped that this volume of poems will create further interest in this virile people and their literature, of which Sir Charles Lyall was such a profound and enthusiastic student.

1930

ETHEL BEATRICE LYALL

C O R R I G E N D A .

- Page xxv., 4 lines from end, for "chace" read "chase".
Page xlvi., line 2, for *shikd'* read *shakd'*.
Page 64, line 11 of poem, for "straight" read "strait."
Page 94, line 12, for "rampant" read "rampart." ,
Page 125, line 13, for *Jamharah* read *Jamharat*.
Page 125, line 17, for 530 read 520.

PREFACE.

Of the fifty translations contained in this book thirty-three originally appeared in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, in the years 1877, 1878, and 1881; the remaining seventeen are now printed for the first time, and several of those republished have been considerably revised.

Little has hitherto been done to make the poetry of Ancient Arabia known to the English reader, and that which has been attempted has followed other methods than those adopted in this collection. In it my endeavour has been, so far as my powers permitted, to render line for line and measure for measure, and to afford in a commentary all the explanation which seemed needful to the understanding of the text. In Germany a like task has been carried out for the whole of the *Hamāsah* by the illustrious FRIEDRICH RUCKERT,¹ of whose work it would be an impertinence for me to express my admiration. To this book I owe the first idea of adapting Arabian metres to English words, but have followed it in a somewhat different manner; I have been obliged to do without the grace of rhyme, which others, more skilful than I, might have compassed without departing too widely from the literal rendering which it has been my effort to give; and I

¹ *Hamāsa, oder die ältesten Arabischen Volkslieder, übersetzt und erläutert von Friedrich Ruckert. In zwei Teilen. Stuttgart, 1846.*

have in some cases rather imitated and extended than exactly copied the original measures.

Nearly all the explanatory matter, in the commentary and Introduction, is drawn from original sources. Much of it has, of course, been used before; but where I could ascertain the authority quoted, I have when possible gone direct to it. I have not been careful, in a work which I hope may be read by others than students of Arabic, to cite in every case the author to whom I am indebted for information. Professor Noldeke's *Beiträge sur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, and Professor Ahlwardt's *Bemerkungen über die Ächttheit der alten Arabischen Gedichte* have been constantly at my side in writing the Introduction, and to them I owe many clues which have enabled me to profit by the stores of information in as-Suyūṭī's *Muṣḥr* and the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. I have avoided as far as I could matters of controversy, which cannot be adequately handled in a publication of this sort, and I have also for the same reason refrained, in my notes to the translations, from any discussion of the readings or renderings adopted.

The first difficulty which a translator of Arabic encounters, in an endeavour to introduce his subject to a British audience, is the rendering of the proper names. The language contains many sounds the right pronunciation of which is difficult for a European; and Arabic names transliterated have an uncouth appearance, which is too apt to cause disgust and weariness. But neither can Arabic poetry be translated, nor stories about Arabs told, without the frequent use of Arabian names; and the only satisfactory course is to give them on a consistent system, so spelt that those who care to pronounce them rightly may know what is meant, while those who do not care to do so will read them as they like. In the following pages the transliteration described below has been adopted:—

Vowels.—*a* unmarked, short, as in the first and last syllables of *American*. In Arabic-speaking countries the sound of this vowel varies between the *a* in *bad*, the *e* in *bed*, and the *u* in *bud*, according to the nature of the neighbouring consonants: but different dialects differ in the application of the rules.

ä, long, as in *father*

æ unmarked, short, as in *it*.

ɛ, long, as in *machine*

eu unmarked, short, as in *bull*. In certain situations, through the influence of a guttural letter, it approximates to *o* in *on*. This has however been left unmarked except in the well-known names ‘Omar, ‘Othmân, ‘Omân.

ü, long, as in *rude*.

The long vowels should always be pronounced *full*

Diphthongs.—*ai*, as in *aisle*, or rather as a sound between the *i* in *rice* and the *ey* in *they*

au, as in the German *Haus*, the *ou* in the English *house*.

Consonants, as in English, with the following exceptions:

d unmarked, further forward on the teeth than the English *d*, more like the French or Italian *d*

dh, like *th* in *then*, *wither* (Old English ð, Modern Greek δ).

q and *gh* are difficult letters which can be correctly learnt only from a speaker of Arabic: the reader may pronounce *q* as English *d*, and *gh* like *dth* (the *th* as in *then*)

gh, a rough guttural like Modern Greek γ, or Flemish *g*.

h, except at the end of words (e.g. *Hamðah*), where it is no longer heard, is to be always articulated, and is never used for the purpose of merely lengthening a vowel, as in English and German; e.g. *Shahl* is not to be sounded as if it rhymed with German *Stahl*, or *Dhuhl* as rhyming with *Stuhl*. The vowels in each case are short by nature, and the words should be pronounced *Shä-hl*, *Dhü-hl* (almost like *Shä-häl*, *Dhü-häl*)

h, a strong aspirate approximating to *ch* in *loch* (Scotch and German), but without its roughness

k, a *k* formed as low down in the throat as possible, the undotted *k* being formed high up between the tongue and the back of the palate.

kh, the *ch* in *loch*, with its roughness.

s unmarked, always as in *since*, never as in *is*.

s and *t* are allied sounds uttered from the same place; *t* is nearly our *t*, but uttered higher up on the palate, with a broadening and greater pressure of the tongue: *s* is the sibilant which is formed by the organs so placed, the breath escaping laterally.

t, the Italian or French *t*, more dental than ours

th, always as in *thin*, *think* (Modern Greek *θ*)

w, *y*, always consonants

Two gutturals for which there is no English equivalent are rendered by ' and '. The first is a brief hiatus, formed by closing the fauces before the utterance of the next vowel or consonant. The second is a strong compression of the fauces of the same character, the right rendering of which requires oral explanation.

The reader who is not careful about exactness may pronounce the dotted letters as if they were not dotted, and neglect the gutturals ' and ', pronouncing *a* when followed by them as *ā* (*Kā'bah*, *Kābah*; *Sā'd*, *Sād*) and *i* and *u* as *ia* and *ua* (*Shi'b*, *Shiab*; *Nu'mān*, *Nuamān*).

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INTRODUCTION

THEIR poetry "is the public Register of the Arab people : by its means genealogies are remembered, and glorious deeds handed down to posterity."¹ Or, as another² says. "Verse in the Days of the Ignorance was to the Arabs the Register of all they knew, and the utmost compass of their wisdom; with it they began their affairs, and with it they ended them." It is this historical character, even more than its high poetic interest, which gives its unique value to that which has survived to us of the compositions of the ancient Arab poets.

It is impossible to fix with any degree of certainty the date when the Arabs first began to practise the art of poetry. The oldest poets of whom we have any remains belong to the time

Arabian Poetry, of the War of al-Basīs, or shortly before that, its rise, which would place them about a hundred and thirty years before the Flight. But these are spoken of, not as the inventors of the poetic art, but as the authorities for the laws of the *Kaṣīdah* or ode, a form of composition which is subject to very rigid conventions as to the contents and sequence of its

¹ A saying to be found (in many different shapes) in almost all the works which deal with the subject, I quote (through as-Suyūtī's *Mużāhib*, n 235) from the *Fikh al-Lughah* of Ibn Fāris. The first to whom it is traceable appears to be the celebrated 'Abdallāh ibn al-'Abbās, who was born shortly before the Flight, and died in the year 68. The "Register" to which Aiab poetry is compared is probably the famous *Dīwān* of 'Omar, in which the lineage and family history of every single Muslim entitled to a stipend from the State were recorded see Muir, *Early Caliphate*, pp 228-29

² Muhammad ibn Salām al-Jumāhi (*Mużāhib*, n 236)

parts. What we possess of the distinguished poets to whom these laws were due is cast in forms which we cannot but suppose to be the outcome of a long education in the construction of verse. The number and complexity of the measures which they use, their established laws of quantity and rhyme, and the uniform manner in which they introduce the subjects of their poems, notwithstanding the distance which often separated one composer from another, all point to a long previous study and cultivation of the art of expression and the capacities of their language, a study of which no record now remains. In the earliest poems, as they now stand, when we compare them with those of fifty or a hundred years later, we can detect little that is archaic or immature. Indeed, one of the most ancient of the group, *Imra-al-Kais*, is generally esteemed the greatest of them, and was so judged of by Muhammad himself.

After this first outburst of song the cultivation of the art extended with immense rapidity. Except the distant 'Omân and Mahrah, where the Himyaritic or an allied speech still survived, no part of Arabia was without its poets. The "Language of Ma'add"—that is, the speech of the Central and so-called Ishmaelite Arabs,—had by this time taken possession of the whole of al-Yaman except the coasts of the Indian Ocean; the supremacy of the *Tubba's* or Himyarite Kings over the rest of the Peninsula had passed away for ever; and in the course of the sixth century after Christ the last traces of it were obliterated when the Kings of Kindah were driven, with their people, from al-Yamâmah and Hajar back to their original inheritance in Hadramaut. A great

uniformity of speech overspread the land, whether due,
Culmination, as is usually assumed, to the general observance of the
Pilgrimage to Mekkah and the meeting of the tribes at 'Ukâdh, or
to some other cause. The same masculine and expressive language
was heard from al-Hirah on the Euphrates, under the shadow

of Persia, and Ghassân in Syria, beneath the great cathedral of Damascus, to Ṣan‘â and Aden in the far South, where a Persian governor ruled in the name of the Shâhanshâh, and the profession of the poet was everywhere honoured and rewarded. “When there appeared a poet in a family of the Arabs, the other tribes round about would gather together to that family and wish them joy of their good luck. Feasts would be got ready, the women of the tribe would join together in bands, playing upon lutes, as they were wont to do at bridals, and the men and boys would congratulate one another; for a poet was a defence to the honour of them all, a weapon to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame for ever. And they used not to wish one another joy but for three things—the birth of a boy, the coming to light of a poet, and the foaling of a noble mare.”¹

The hundred years which elapsed between the death of Kulaib and the appearance of Muhammad as a prophet saw all that is best of ancient Arab verse, and even the first threatenings of its

and decline decline. Imra-al-Kais was rightly placed by ‘Ali²

before other poets in that he practised his art neither for fear nor favour, but by the end of this period it had already become the custom to reward lavishly those who composed panegyrics. The court of an-Nu‘mân, the last King of al-Hîrah, was the resort of the most famous poets of the day, who lived luxuriously upon the bounty which their poems procured. The same, though with a smaller circle of attendants, was the case at the court of Ghassân: while within the Peninsula great chiefs vied with one another in the magnificence of the presents which they bestowed upon those who praised them in verse. These things led the way to the extravagances of after days,

¹ Ibn Rashik, quoted in *Muzhn*, n. 236.

² *Aghâni*, xv. 97.

when the art of poetry disappeared in that of flattery, and the noble pride and free spirit of the Desert, which "never praised a man but for that which was in him,"¹ gave place to the servile and venal adulation of the courts of Damascus and Baghdad.

The form and spirit of ancient Arabian poetry are very distinct, though it is not easy to bring it within the classes known to

Its general European criticism. It is not epic, nor even character narrative, except in so far as the description of incident serves to heighten the picture of character. Still less is it dramatic, since the only person and measure known to the speaker are himself and his own ideal. The Greek idyll is perhaps the type which comes nearest to it in Classical poetry. The Arabian ode sets forth before us a series of pictures, drawn with confident skill and first-hand knowledge, of the life its maker lived, of the objects among which he moved, of his horse, his camel, the wild creatures of the wilderness, and of the landscape in the midst of which his life and theirs was set; but all, however loosely they seem to be bound together, are subordinate to one dominant idea, which is the poet's unfolding of himself, his admirations and his hates, his prowess and the freedom of his spirit. It is no poetry which seeks to give form to the suprasensual, which brings before us many-coloured stories, or casts a poetic light on a rich circle of thought: it is a poetry which makes it its main business to depict life and nature as they are, with little addition of phantasy."² No poetry better fulfils Mr. Matthew Arnold's definition of "a criticism of life"; no race has more completely succeeded in drawing itself for all time, in its grandeur and its limitations, its best and its worst. It is in this sense that the poetry of the Pagan Arabs is most truly their history. In it

¹ *Aghāni*, ix. 147. The words were used by the Khalifah 'Omar of Zuhair, the author of No. L. in the following collection.

² Nöldeke, *Beträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, p. xxvi.

the men of old live their very life, and have found for themselves an expression, the power and faithfulness of which those who understand it best are least able to exaggerate. The verse of Zuhair which stands on the title-page of this book is a true witness of their ideal in song : what a poet said in his rhymes he had experienced himself; what commanded him to his hearers, what commands him to us, is the accuracy and truth with which he drew for them that which he and they knew, and joined their mind and life of every day to the choicest words and noblest form of utterance which their speech permitted.

Arabic poetry of the Classical age presents only two divisions, called by native authors the *Ode* (*kaṣidah*) and the *Fragment* (*kūṭah*). The latter is often merely a portion of the former detached from Odes and Occasional pieces

kind of verse, it may more suitably be described as an *occasional piece*. The *Ode* has a strictly prescribed sequence of ideas and subjects. Unless it be a lamentation over the dead, or deal with some equally serious topic, it must begin with the mention of women and the constantly shifted habitations of the wandering tribesmen seeking pasture throughout the Winter and Spring ; the poet must tell of his love and its troubles, and, if he likes, may describe the beauty of his mistress. From this theme he turns to the main object of his poem, either abruptly or by interposing the description of his horse or camel, by the means of which he escapes from the burden of memory when it grows too hard for him ; the swiftness of the beast he rides is compared to that of the wild kine of the desert, the wild ass, or the ostrich, in drawing which he displays his skill and intimate acquaintance with their habits. The main object, thus reached at last, may be a panegyric on his tribe, himself, or some other person, the description of some scene of travel or war, of the chace or revelry, a satire, a pleading, or a warning to the foolish. Having said what he

has to say, he brings his poem to an end without any elaborate device, sometimes by some precepts of gnomic wisdom, often by the description of a far-reaching storm, the sweep of which carries his thoughts to distant lands, or to the pastures whence he started, where its rain will revive again the freshness of the many-coloured upland meadows. The compass of such an ode rarely exceeds a hundred couplets, or falls below twenty-five. The *Mu'allakât*, called “the *long poems*” *par excellence*, average eighty-five couplets each, the longest having 104 and the shortest sixty-four. The *occasional piece* is usually much shorter; it is confined to some one incident or purpose, and it has none of the elaborate descriptive passages which are found in the Ode. To understand it thoroughly we generally require to know the circumstances in which it was composed; it does not, like the *Kasîdah*, tell its own tale. In the following collection No. L is the most complete example of a *kasîdah*; No. XLV. is an excellent specimen of the introductory portion or prelude; No. XLIX is an equally typical conclusion. In No. XLVIII. the nature of the theme and the situation in which the poet found himself have combined to make the amatory prelude as short as possible: it is restricted to the mere mention of the woman’s name. In Nos. XLVI. and XLVII. no such prelude exists at all; the first is a dirge, to which it would obviously be inappropriate, the second a solemn exhortation to an enemy to exercise generosity towards a fallen foe. The rest of the collection is chiefly made up of occasional pieces, though several (*e.g.* No. XXII. and nearly all the amatory poems, Nos. XXXIV. to XLIII.) are fragments, either taken from or intended to form portions of completed odes. The simplest kind of occasional piece is exhibited by the extemporized iambics called *rajas*, examples of which will be found in the stories of Duraid and Rabi’ah appended to Nos. XXIII. and XXVII. It is probable that in this last style of composition we have the germ out of which Arabian poetry

sprang; its cadence is that into which the Arabic language most easily falls when it passes out of prose; and the recurring rhymes, which are twice as frequent as in the majority of the other metres, are characteristic also of the measured prose which we find in the utterances of the pagan *Kâhins* or diviners, and the solemn warnings of the *Kur'ân*. The *rajas* metre was not used for *laṣdâhs* or odes until after the Flight.

The Arab of the pagan times, like his descendant of the present day, lived by the breeding of horses, camels, and sheep. Except in al-Yaman and the lowlands of Tibâmah and Hajar, the soil of

The pagan Arabs. their life peninsular Arabia is unfit, from want of moisture, for producing grain. Date-palms were, then as now, grown in the spots watered by permanent wells, whence irrigation was practised by means of the Persian wheel, worked by a camel. The whole peninsula does not contain any permanent stream, nor any fountain the waters of which are not soon swallowed up by the sand. Rain, brought by the South-west Monsoon from the Indian Ocean, falls on the lofty mountain ranges of al-Yaman during the summer months: the rest of the Arabian Uplands (called *Nayd*) is visited by showers only during the months of winter and spring. These showers begin with the autumnal equinox, and continue through the winter, gradually falling off as the spring progresses. Their effect is to cause a vigorous growth of herbage over the great wastes of Central Arabia, and the replenishing of many watering-places which during the hot season are dry. The permanent settlements of each tribe are those about its permanent water-supply, which does not fail in summer; but as soon as the great downs of *Najd* become covered with the young pasture, the tribesmen move forth with their herds, and occupy their spring quarters until the fierce heat and drought which set in soon after the vernal equinox drive them back again to their wells. This pleasant season of grass, of flowers, and of plenty

(generally designated for shortness “the Spring,” but including our winter as well), when the herds of camels were thus distributed over the champaign, was the time during which the Arab poet made the acquaintances the breaking-off of which, by the approach of summer, he laments in the preludes to his odes. When the calendar was first organized, about 150 years before Muhammad’s mission, the first three months of this spring season coincided with the sacred months of peace¹ established by custom throughout Arabia; and war being thus forbidden, intimacies and friendships often sprang up between members of stocks which at other seasons were at deadly feud. This is the situation which the poems illustrate, and in the midst of which they place us.

War, private or public, personal or tribal, is the chief subject of the occasional pieces, but not to the same extent of the *kasidahs*. Flight and foray certainly bulked largely in the life of a pagan

Society and War Arab They were the excitement of his days, the things which he remembered amid the monotony of the years. Yet we should probably mistake greatly if we imagined that he had nothing else to do. Even the most famous warriors were not always at war. Duraid, who lived to be almost a hundred years old, is said to have made “near a hundred expeditions”: if his warlike activity occupied only half his life, this would give but two raids a year, many of which must have been very petty affairs; and Duraid lived on a border-land, where the Hijâz marched with al-Yaman, the peoples of which were as constantly at feud as those north and south of the Tweed when Scotland had a king of her

¹ The months of Dhu-l-Ka’dah, Dhu-l-Hijjah, and Muhamram. The ancient Arabian year was, like the present Muhammadan one, lunar, but an attempt was made to bring it into accordance with the natural solar year by the addition, every three years, of an intercalary month. There was, however, still a defect of rather more than a day in each year, and this in the course of time had caused the months to retrograde so that, at the time of the Flight, they were six months from their original place. The intercalation was abolished by Muhammad in the 10th year of the Flight, since which date the months have ceased to have any connection with the seasons, each going the whole circuit of the solar year three times in the course of a century.

own. The laws of blood-revenge, if they imposed on the relatives and fellow-tribesmen of the slain the duty of retaliation for all lives taken in a feud, yet had this virtue, that they made it a grave thing to shed blood. Certain large groups were, indeed, almost continually at war with one another. Ma'add, the people of the Hijâz and al-Yamâmah generally, looked upon al-Yaman as their natural prey, and were constantly raiding on the herds of their southern neighbour. Between Tamîm and Bakr son of Wâil there was permanent bad blood. Ghâtafan and Hawâzin had a standing feud. In the north, the kingdom of al-Hirâh, the representative of Persian predominance, was the hereditary enemy of Ghassân, the representative of the might of Rome. But though there was strife and bloodshed enough and to spare, there must also have been much pastoral prosperity and friendly intercourse. The times were hard for the weak and friendless, but they developed to their fullest the virtues of the strong. In the maxims of conduct with which Zuhair's great poem¹ concludes (—whether they are all rightly appended thereto or not—) we see a true mirror of the age: a society in which men respected strength, and knew how to combine for its sake, subordinating private likings to the common good of the tribe; in which wisdom and experience were honoured, and those men duly valued who upheld public faith and common ties. The distinctions of right and wrong were clear enough, if their application was restricted to a somewhat narrow sphere. With no national centre of authority, the duties of enforcing justice and providing for self-defence lay upon each man and his brethren by blood or covenant. The strong man armed kept his house:

Who holds not his foe away from his cistern with sword and spear,
it is broken and spoiled: who uses not roughness, him shall men wrong.

The master-passion of the Arab was revenge. In its prosecution

¹ No L.

he was conscious of a burning fever, the only medicine for which
 Blood-revenge was the blood of his foe. Language in this sense
 recurs constantly throughout the pagan poetry.

|| Hearts are cured of rancour-sickness, whether men against us war,
 or we carry death among them dying, slaying, healing comes.

The root of this thirst for "wild justice" seems to lie in the strong affection by which men of the same kindred were bound together, an affection which is testified in the multitude of noble dirges which form one of the most attractive classes of the ancient poetry. We can understand how men who mourned for their brethren as Duraid did for 'Abdallâh, Mutammim for Mâlik, Labid for Arbad, or al-Khanṣâ for Sakhr and Mu'âwiyah, were possessed by a fury of hate against those to whom their bereavement was due. And if this fury too often revolts us in its expression of savage joy over the death of the slayer, we at least owe to the affection which inspired it some of the most admirable pictures of heroic character which primitive society has produced

When not at war, the Aīab had plenty of occupation in attending to his herds of camels. Their flesh was his meat, their milk his drink, and from the latter he prepared a species of cheese

Occupations called *nkit*. The grain which he could not entirely do without he procured by ship from Egypt, and by land from the markets of al-Trâk, from the lowlands by the Persian Gulf, and perhaps from al-Yaman¹. By their command over these sources of food supply the Kings of al-Hîrah and the Persian Government were able to keep in check to a considerable extent the clans of the neighbouring desert. In this way the influence of al-Hîrah was felt as far as, and even beyond, the mountains of Tayyi, while governors appointed direct from Persia ruled in Hajar and brought pressure to bear on al-Yamâmah².

¹ It is doubtful whether this region could do more than feed itself. Wheat, barley, and millet (*dhuwâh*, sorghum) were the cereals grown in al-Yaman.

² See the story of the Day of u--Salkah in the notes to No XLVI.

The tending of camels pervades the whole of old Arabian poetry, and words and metaphors drawn from it are in constant use for all manner of strange purposes¹. The worth of all valuable things was estimated in camels, and these were the common currency in transactions between man and man. The horse was a more costly and precious possession, but figures to a considerably less extent in literature it was a luxury, the other a necessity. When men went upon an expedition, they rode camels, and led their mares alongside until they arrived at the place of action, when they mounted the latter. Sheep and goats were also kept in considerable numbers; but the pasture which the country afforded was not so well suited to them as to the herds of camels, and we hear little of them in comparison with the latter. The Arabs of Najd had a great contempt for all handicrafts, which were often followed, like other petty commerce, and especially the sale of wine, by Jews settled among them. Among the sedentary and agricultural population of al-Yaman, on the other hand, several manufactures existed, the products of which were highly esteemed elsewhere in Arabia. Red leather, made of hides tanned with the leaves of the *salam* (*mimosa flava*), was an important article of commerce in this region, which also supplied woven fabrics, coarse and fine, musk, frankincense, and swords made of iron smelted in the country. A great trade with India had the port of Aden for its emporium, and its wares were carried northwards through the province to the Hijâz, and thence by the prosperous trading community of Mekkah on into Syria. In such commercial ventures Muhammad's youth was spent.

Horse-racing was a favourite pastime.² Another was a game of chance, played with arrows, called *al-Mausir*.³ The chace of

Amusements. the wild ox (a species of bovine antelope) and the white antelope, and sometimes even of the wild ass (though the last was too swift to be often overtaken), was

¹ See Index, s.v. "Camel"

² See p. 19

³ See p. 30.

the common form of sport. Trained dogs were used in following the two former, the hunter being mounted and armed with a bow and arrows. With these animals, with the wolves and foxes, the hyenas, eagles, vultures, ostriches, hawks, sandgrouse, and other fauna of the wilderness, the poets had an intimate acquaintance. Of the lion we hear less, though his name applied to men is of constant occurrence; certain places in the Peninsula, few in number, are mentioned as inhabited by lions, which also frequented the reedy swamps along the lower Euphrates; but in the Uplands of Arabia there do not seem to have been many lions at the time when the poems were composed. Wine¹ was drunk at festivals (but not as part of the ordinary diet) by those who could afford it, and power to stand much of it was one of the gifts of fortune of which men made their boast. The rich at their feasts entertained their friends with plentiful wine, flesh of camels and sheep, and perfumes, and as they ate and drank, Syrian or Persian singing-girls sang before them to the music of lutes. Generosity and hospitality were reckoned the first of virtues, and the hero of song must spare nothing for himself in the service of his guests. The picture drawn by Sulmī in No. XXXII. of the following selections is a summary of many hundreds of like passages in the odes and fragments. The Arab thoroughly enjoyed his life: one² says—

How wonderful were Life, would it but last!

The thought of the grave gave him but a keener zest for the moment. Death was very present to him; but the fame of a gallant man was more to him than death.

It is by no means easy to characterise with confidence the religion of the Arabs before al-Islām. Worship of the sun, moon, and

¹ See pp. 62-63

² Al-Burj of Tayyīl. See Ḥamāṣah, p. 562

stars seems to have prevailed among them. We hear of idols to which temples were erected, and trees and stones Religion. which were themselves worshipped as holy. But though the proper names borne by the Arabs of the Ignorance testify to some sort of devotion to these objects, we find little trace of it in the poems. It has been supposed that this is due to expurgation of such passages by Muslim revisers in after days. It is indeed possible enough that *Allâh* has been substituted in many places for *al-Lât*, but all the changes which we have to imagine are not of this simple character, nor has the elimination, if it was undertaken, been thoroughly carried out. In the absence of proof that more passages bearing on the pagan worship originally formed part of the poems, it would seem a better warranted conclusion that the Arab of Central Arabia, in the days before al-Islâm, interested himself little in religion of any sort. A like character is given to the Bedawî of the present day, in spite of the mighty spiritual awakening wrought by Muhammad's preaching, by travellers who have lived in his company; and in this, as in many other things, it seems probable that he is a true descendant of his pagan forefathers. The same poet whose judgment on life has just been quoted ends his review thus:

We whirl our day from this to that—at last
home come we, great our store or nought at all,
To pits where underneath are hollow rooms,
and overhead broad flags for evermore.¹

Nevertheless, of sacrifice and offerings we do hear. Al-Mundhir son of Mâ-as-Samâ, king of al-Hîrah, offered up to al-'Uzzâ (rendered by Procopius, who tells the tale, Aphrodite) the son of his rival al-Hârith of Ghassân, whom he had taken prisoner. A Syriac annalist says that he put to death as a sacrifice to the same goddess 400 captive nuns². The poet of Asad, 'Abîd son of al-Abras, fell

¹ Hamîsah, p. 562.

² Noldeke, *Geschichte der Sasaniden*, p. 171.

a victim to the same horrible custom.¹ Al-Mundhir had made a vow that on a certain day in each year he would sacrifice the first person he saw; 'Abid came in sight on the unlucky day, and was accordingly killed and the altar smeared with his blood. But within the Peninsula we know of no instance of human sacrifice. Camels, sheep, and goats were offered up at Mekkah, and at various stones (*anjâb*) elsewhere which were regarded either as idols or as altars of the gods. The sacrifices at Mekkah took place during the month of pilgrimage, one of the three sacred months with which the year ended and began; those performed at other places were carried out in the fourth sacred month, called Rajab, the seventh of the year, which originally fell in the middle of the summer. In this month also, as in the other consecutive three, war was forbidden. The institution of sacred months and the Mekkan pilgrimage are the most conspicuous observances of the pre-islamic religion, and must have brought some sense of its sanctions home to every Arab of Ma'add²

Another evidence of some sort of religious feeling is the multitude of oaths with which the poems and the traditions relating to them are filled. "By God!" (*Allâh*), "By the Life of God!" are the commonest of these. An-Nâbighah (a poet who had a close acquaintance with Christianity) swears³—"By the life of Him to whom for years I have come as a pilgrim, and by the blood poured forth on the standing stones⁴ by Him who gives security to the birds which take refuge with Him, against which brush without harming them the riders of Mekkah as they pass through the coverts where they dwell!" Idolatrous oaths are found, but not

¹ The story is in Aghînî, lxx 86-88. By a not uncommon confusion, the same story is also told of an-Nu'mân, the last king of al-Hîrah, al-Mundhir's grandson (see Lane, s v *għarbi*, etc.). This is consistent neither with the date of 'Abid (a contemporary of Hujr father of Imra-al-Kas) nor with the fact that an-Nu'mân was a Christian.

² It is uncertain how far the tribes of al-Yaman took part in the pilgrimage. Probably the institution had only recently made its way among them at the time of the appearance of Muhammad. At least two tribes of Yamâni origin, Khath'am and Tayy, did not observe the sacred months (see Lane, s v *ħadâm*).

³ See his *diuān* in Ahlwardt, Six Poets, pp 7-8

often—"By al-Lât!" "By al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ!" "By the Sun!" "By the altar-stones of Wâil!" Possibly "By al-Lât" has been changed in some cases to "By Allâh." There is however no reasonable doubt that the name of Allâh, the Supreme God, was well known to the Arabs of the Ignorance; their position in reference to the monotheism of al-Islâm was not the denial of Him, but the assertion that He had sons and daughters, their tribal deities, who shared with Him in the divine power, and interceded with Him on behalf of their worshippers. This is clearly seen in the curious story of Muhammad's lapse,¹ when he made a compromise with idolatry and recited in the court of the Ka'bah the 53rd chapter of the Kur'ân, which in its original form contained the following passage—

Have ye considered al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ,
And Manâh the other third?
—These are the most high-winging Heavenly Cranes,
and verily their intercession is graciously accepted by God.

Wherefore bow down before God and worship Him!

The effect of these words was to produce an immediate and delighted acceptance by the people of the Prophet's message, and a peace which lasted long enough for its tidings to reach the believers who had taken refuge in distant Abyssinia, and hastened on hearing of it to return. What Muhammad on this occasion admitted is evident from the words in the exactly contrary sense which were afterwards substituted for the third and fourth of these verses.

Shall ye have the male offspring, and He the female?²

Verily this were an unjust division!

These are nought but names which ye and your fathers have named: God hath not sent down upon them any power. They who worship them follow nought but their own fancy, and that which their souls desire, and yet hath there come to them from their Lord the true Guidance.

¹ See Tabari, i. 1192-94, and Muri's Life of Mahomet, pp. 86-90.

² The three deities named are all goddesses, believed to represent phases of the moon.

Of a belief in a Future Life and a Reckoning beyond the grave the traces in the ancient poetry are not numerous, and most of those which exist appear to be due to Christian, and perhaps Jewish, influence.¹ The ordinary Arabs of the desert had but a vague

^{Belief in a future life} notion of a Hereafter, and probably connected with it no idea of reward or punishment. One of their customs pointing to a belief that the dead did not wholly die was to tie by the grave of a dead man a she-camel or a mare, which was left there without food or water till it expired.² Muslim authors say that they thought that, at the Resurrection, the dead would come to the gathering-place of mankind riding upon the beast thus starved to death; but it seems more probable that the animal was intended for his use in the world of shadows. Another strange superstition was that the soul of a dead man became an owl, which lived in or about the grave where his body was laid; some restrict this notion to persons slain unavenged.³ The Arabs liked the neighbourhood of a grave to be green, and often dug one in a garden, where irrigation kept the herbage fresh. The body was placed in a lateral excavation⁴ hollowed out in the side of the trench dug downwards, and shut off from the latter by slabs of stone before the grave was filled in, above was a mound of earth, a cairn of stones, or a raised platform of stone flags.

The Arabs used to consult their deities as to the future, casting

The Arabs disliked female children —“They ascribe to God daughters—far be it from Him¹ and for themselves they desire them not. When news is brought to one of them that a girl has been born to him, dark grows his face, and he is full of trouble—he hides himself from his folk because of the evil news,—shall he keep it in shame, or hide it away in the dust?” (Kur xvi 59-61) This dislike sometimes went the length of infanticide, female children being buried alive new-born. But this custom had nearly died out in the Prophet’s time, when it was revived again by Kaus son of ‘Âsim of Tamîn (see p. 33).

¹ This point is more fully treated in the notes to No. XLVII. I believe that there has been a tendency to underestimate the extent and amount of Christian influence throughout Arabia before Muhammad, but it no doubt appealed only to the higher and more devout spirits.

² Called *bâtiyah*

³ See notes to No. XXXIV.

⁴ Called *tâhd*

lots (by means of specially-marked arrows) before the shrine or image, as the Hebrews did before the Ephod¹

Divination.

Besides this means of supernatural guidance, they had soothsayers or diviners, called *Kâhins*,² who delivered their oracles in a rapt style, in short rhyming sentences which the hearers believed to be the direct utterances of the Divine Power. Omens and auguries (drawn from the flight and cries of birds, the passage of animals in one direction or another, the fall of stones cast in a particular manner, etc) were largely attended to, and the interpreters of these appearances were often women.

The place of women in the society of pagan Arabia was appreciably higher than that which they hold under al-Islâm. No

Place of women in old Arabia doubt in the chances of war they frequently in-

curred the risk of ill treatment but this risk they shared with all that was physically weak and helpless in those stormy times. They had much liberty which was afterwards denied them. They could exercise the right of divorce, which Muhammad restricted to the husband. They were much freer in their movements than they became after the ordinance of the veil had been prescribed. They entered general society, and showed hospitality to their husband's friends. In many cases they selected their mates for themselves, instead of having to accept the choice made for them by their guardians. It is especially in this respect that the poetry of the Ignorance is distinguished from that of after years. The prelude to the *kaṣidah* is based upon frank, honest, and approximately equal relations of the sexes, guaranteed by mutual courtesy and respect, and belongs to an age when men could compare one woman with another, and had no small experience of the gracious and beautiful in womanhood. Such a female character as ash-Shanfarâ has drawn for us³ was possible only

¹ See notes to No XLIX p. 106

² The same word as the Hebrew *Kôhén* (A.V. "priest")

³ See No XLV.

in the simplicity of the Desert. The new Faith did something for women; but by the institution of the Veil, by the licence of divorce accorded to the husband alone, and by the sanction allowed to unlimited servile concubinage, for which there had been no opportunity in the days of the Ignorance, their position was fatally impaired. Human nature has been stronger than legislation, and among the millions of Muhammadans the liberties of divorce, concubinage, and even polygamy count for comparatively little; but the Veil is a positive ordinance which is most strictly and generally observed, and it shuts out from society, from human intercourse and civilizing influence, the half of humankind. The Arab humanists themselves were struck by the deterioration in respect of sexual morality which ensued upon al-Islâm, and have noted it in no doubtful language.¹

In this free and vigorous nomadic life the old poetry was born and grew, and upon it it lived. When the life changed with the great upheaval of al-Islâm, the poetry changed also. Muhammad himself did not love the poets.

Their careless enjoyment of the day, their extravagant boasting and exaltation of the tribe and the singer's self, the ideal of revelry and boundless generosity which they extolled, were all directly contrary to his serious spirit.² He had a special grievance against them in that his enemies called him a poet himself, and insinuated that his revelations were no better than their effusions.

¹ See 'Ikd of Ibn 'Abd-Rabbih, in 60

² The denunciation of the poets in chap. xxv, verses 221–227, of the Kur'ân is well known—

Shall I declare unto you upon whom the Devils descend?
They descend upon every wicked Liar!
They incline their ear unto them, and the most of them are liars.
And the Poets—these follow them those who go astray;
Seest thou not how in every valley they wander distraught,
And how they say that which they do not?
—Save those of them who have believed, and do works of righteousness, and keep
God much in their minds

The saving clause at the end has much the air of a subsequent addition

Yet he employed poets in his service, and in the day of his power acknowledged the magic of verse. His immediate successors were men deeply imbued with the literature of the Desert, and good critics of that which is best in it. 'Omar in particular is frequently quoted as a witness in the discussion of the question which seems to have much exercised the early scholars—Who was the greatest poet of the Arabs? When Muḥammad arose, the poets were never more numerous, though the most famous had died before his teaching gained acceptance in the land. Those who had sung in the Ignorance, continued for the most part to sing under al-Islām. If they had had formerly only to tell of strife between tribe and tribe, they now had the wonderful conquests of the new Faith in the North and West to celebrate, and leaders to praise who commanded hosts before which the whole strength of a tribe was insignificant, and dispensed gifts such as had not entered into the imagination of those who had thronged the petty court of al-Hirah. There is no lack of verse dealing with warlike deeds during the first century after the Flight; the art of panegyric bloomed under a most favourable sun, and the luxurious living which set in with the conquests of Persia and Syria brought about a great development of sentimental and amatory poetry. The Dynasty of Umayyah, which ruled at Damascus for near a hundred years,¹ counted among its court poets names which their contemporaries placed on a level with those of pagan days;² and certainly there was more than a distant flavour of heathendom in their

¹ Mu'awiyah was appointed governor of Syria by 'Omar in A.H. 18 his effective rule as Khalifah may be considered to date from the battle of Siffin, 36-37. The dynasty came to an end in 132 (dates A.D. 639, 657, 750).

² The most celebrated poets of the dynasty of Umayyah were 'Omar son of Abū Rabī'ah, of the Kuraish (23-93), a master of amatory poetry, Ja'īn and al-Farazdak, both of Tamīm (both died in 110), al-Akhtal of Taghlib, a Christian by religion, their chief rival, Jamīl of 'Udhrah (died 82), Kuthayyūn of Khuzā'ah (died 105), al-Kumāt of Asad (92-126), and Dhu-r rummāh of 'Adī ibn 'Abd-Manāt (78-117). Dhu-r-rummāh was the last really great representative of desert song, he could neither read nor write, but amanuenses took down his poems at his dictation.

verse. The one pious Muslim of this family who occupied the throne, 'Omar son of 'Abd-al-'Aziz,¹ clearly discerned the anti-islamic bias of their poetry, and refused to continue to them the gifts which they had received from his predecessors ; his reign of two years and a half was, however, but a brief episode in the history of the House.

But notwithstanding this activity in poetical composition, the great revolution² of al-Islâm in reality brought to an end, not immediately, but surely, the inspiration of desert song. From

Change in the Arabs' language and life. the very commencement of their career of conquest, a change in the Arabs' language and their ways of life set in, which gradually made the

speech of the old poets strange to them, and their ideas and images no longer vivid presentments of things seen and known, but far-off and rapidly-fading memories of the past. The expression no longer suited the life, and a new form of expression had not yet been contrived. The whole strength of Arabia was flung northwards, eastwards, westwards. Occupation followed conquest, and in the midst of a population speaking a kindred dialect,³ the Arabic language rapidly assimilated itself to the speech of the conquered, and passed into a lopped and broken condition, the parent of the colloquial idiom of the present day. Town life in al-Îrâk, in Syria, in Egypt, in Khurâsân, took the place of the nomadic life of Arabia. The poetry of the Desert rested on conditions which, except for the few who were left behind in the great emigration, no longer existed. The things it described were no longer to be seen, and its faithfulness of description, wherein to its hearers its charm consisted, was no longer possible or capable of appreciation. For three or four generations men continued to make verse on the models of those who had so

¹ A.H. 99-101 (A.D. 717-720).

² The Aramaic or (as the Arabs called it) Nabathian

suddenly become "the ancients," and to use their images and language as a quarry; but it was, in a steadily increasing degree, mere imitation, the serving-up again of things that had been said before. And thus, with the fall of the House of Umayyah, Arabian poetry, rightly so called, came to an end. The poetic literature which succeeded it was inspired by study and reflection, not for the most part produced on Arab soil, and expressed in a speech which was no longer spoken as a vernacular.¹

Perhaps this rapid corruption of language and change of ideas might have been arrested, or might have come about

The old poetry
not written but
handed down by
rāūis

more gradually, had any *written* literature existed when the Arabs first began to stream out of their own country. But the custom of committing verse to writing did not begin till near the end of the

first century after the Flight. The whole of the old poetry was preserved by oral tradition only. The poet's fellow-tribesmen were those who kept his verses alive by continual recitation, and spread them on their wingless flight throughout the land. But besides this popular and generally diffused knowledge, a special apparatus existed for the perpetuation of a poet's compositions in the institution of *rāūis*, or *reciters*. Every professed poet had his *rāūi*, to whom he committed his poems as he composed them, and who in his turn transmitted them to others. Many of the *rāūis* were themselves poets, and many celebrated poets were also *rāūis*. Imra-al-Kais, man of al-Yaman and prince of Kindah, was the *rāūi* of Abū Du'ad of al-Hirah, and is believed to have gained

¹ The above remarks must be understood of Arabic literature in general. Arabia was not entirely depopulated in the first century, and it was a considerable time before the corruption of the Arabic language invaded the Peninsula. In the south, in al-Yamâmah, and elsewhere, many minor poets survived who carried on the traditions of the former times, and when the humanists in the second century began to search for relics of the old poetry, their enquiries were rewarded by the discovery of much that had been so handed down. But the centre of gravity of the Arab race was now outside of Arabia, and it was there and not in the Peninsula that their literature developed itself.

from him his skill in describing the horse, in which he is reckoned a master. Zuhair of Muzaïnah was the *rā'ī* of Aus son of Hajar of Tamim, his step-father, and of at-Tufail of Ghani, both of whom he vastly eclipsed in fame. His own *rā'ī* was al-Huṭai'ah of 'Abs, who died in the year of the Flight 59. Al-Huṭai'ah's *rā'ī* was Hudbah son of Khashram of Kudā'ah, who was put to death for homicide at al-Madinah shortly after 54; his *rā'ī* was Jamil of 'Udhrāh, who died in 82; Jamil's *rā'ī* was Kuthayir of Khuzā'ah, who died in 105. All these were distinguished poets as well as *rā'īs*, and taken together they carry the tradition of the art over nearly two centuries. The office of a *rā'ī* was not only to know the text of his master's compositions, but also to be able to explain its allusions, to clear up its difficulties, and to relate the circumstances in which each poem was composed. His stock of knowledge thus consisted of tradition, in a great part historical, as well as of verse. Although the art of writing had been applied to the Arabic language a considerable time before the appearance of Muḥammad, and was well known by repute to the old poets,¹ and practically to most of the Kuraish, the characters used, being destitute of vowels and diacritical marks, were but a species of very imperfect shorthand, and verse so written would have required the assistance of one who was acquainted with the proper reading before it could be correctly read. It was not till the secretaries of al-Hajjāj, the famous governor of al-Irāk, invented diacritical signs, by which the 15 characters of the alphabet are made to do duty for 28 distinct letters, that written Arabic could be deciphered with any certainty;

¹ One of the commonest of their similes compares the lines left by an encampment to lines of writing in a book. According to al-Hārith's *Mu'allakah*, vv 66-67, the peace of Dhu-l-Majāz, which terminated the War of al-Basūs about 534 A.D., was embodied in a written treaty. A bilingual inscription, Arabic and Greek, dated 568 A.D., has been discovered in the Haurān, the characters of which are identical with those of early Muslim times (Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, p 361, No 2464)

and the proper utterance of the vowels was not indicated till much later still.¹ For these reasons, as well as from the persistence of ancient custom, the oral transmission of verse and the traditions relating to it continued long after the Kur'ân, the other great literary inheritance of the Arab race, had been fixed in its written form.

There can be little doubt that in the course of the century which elapsed between the Flight and the first commencement

Losses due to this cause of written record the poetry of the Ignorance and the traditions relating to it suffered serious losses.

Rânis died and left no heirs; whole tribes were scattered in distant lands, and forgot their desert speech and the memories of pagan times. That which has survived to us must, in the ordinary course of transmission from man to man, have gained and lost something from the infirmities of human memory. It is the general opinion of the native critics that the extant poems of the Ignorance are but the least part of what once existed, and that the great majority have been lost. Without entering on this question, however, or that of the authenticity of the poems still extant, it may be said that what remains is amply sufficient to give us a clear and comprehensive view of the life and temper of the age, and that questions as to authorship are for our purposes of but secondary importance. If a few of the poems the genuineness of which is disputed were the work of later times, they were at least the work of scholars who had thoroughly imbued themselves with the spirit of the ancients whom they imitated, and to whom they attributed their own compositions; while in the majority of cases

¹ Al-Hajjâj ruled in al-Îrâk from 75 to 95 H. The diacritical marks and vowel-signs now used are believed to be the invention of the Father of Arabic grammar, al-Khalîl son of Aḥmad (100–175) but a distinction of the vowels by means of coloured dots placed above, before, and below the consonants, is said to have been devised by Abu-l-Aswad ad-Du'âlf (died 69) at the instance of Ziyâd ibn Abîhi during the reign of Mu'âwiya. This had reference, like the points invented by the scribes of al-Hajjâj, to the text of the Kur'ân alone.

the question is not whether the poems are ancient and truly reflect the old life, but whether they are rightly assigned to the poets whose names they bear. For us, to whom their interest consists in their contents, it matters little whether they be anonymous or attributed to their true authors.

While the art of verse, as the ancients understood it, was thus little by little losing its vitality, and the poems and traditions of the heroic age passing beyond recovery by the death of those who knew them and the turning of men's minds to other things,

How the poems were preserved to us, the Humanists a new study was gradually rising into prominence which eventually led to the transfer of all that survived of the old poetry to writing, and thus rescued it from the disappearance with which it was threatened. The same cause which brought about the decay of Classical Arab verse—the corruption and change in the speech of the Arabs who settled the new Muslim empire—also rendered the language of the Sacred Volume, and of the traditions concerning the Prophet upon whose pattern believers were to fashion their lives, more and more unfamiliar and obscure. And from the necessity thus created of studying Classical Arabic as a foreign language arose the great fabric of Arabic Grammar and Lexicography. From the first days of this study the language of the old poets was applied to illustrate and explain that of the Kur'ân and Tradition. "When ye desire to learn the meaning of any strange word in the Kur'ân, look for it in the verses of the poets," said Ibn al-'Abbâs. At first single verses only were thus culled from the lips of *râ'is*, and woven into the commentary or treatise on grammar. The older the verse, the more authority it possessed, since only in the Ignorance and the Prophet's own day was the language of the poets comparable with that used in the Kur'ân. But in the course of time the verses themselves were seen to call for explanation: until they were fully understood, to use them

to elucidate the Holy Volume was to interpret the obscure by that which was darker still. So first their context was sought for, and then those who alone could give an account of them, the *râ'isîs*. Up to this time the study of language had been but the handmaid of theology, and profane literature was used only to illuminate the Sacred Word. But soon the scholars began to perceive that the poets had something to say for themselves, and that there was life and interest in the old traditions. Hitherto poetry, as practised by the Court poets of Damascus, had (not without reason) been looked on with a very evil eye by the pious. Now the tables were turned ; the study of the language of the Kur'ân developed into that of literature at large, and students became, not theologians, but humanists. This great change fell in the last years of the Umayyad dynasty, and in the first three reigns of the House of al-'Abbâs. The rule of al-Mansûr,¹ the second of the latter, is the time in which the commencement of criticism and record, as applied to the old literature, is commonly placed, though something was doubtless done before that. The greatest names² in this movement, as collectors and recorders of

¹ 136-158 A.H. (754-775 A.D.)

² The following list of eminent humanists, with their dates, will be found useful :—

Chiefly collectors —

'Amr son of Sharâhib, ash-Shâ'bî .

born 29, died 104 or 105

Abû 'Amr ibn al-'Alâ, the teacher of Abû 'Ubaidah, and the first collector of much old poetry, some of Imra-al-Kus was first gathered by him a good commentator and traditionist as well as a collector .

born 70, 68, or 66, died 151, 154 or 159

Hammâd ar-Râwiyah, son of Shâpûr, a man of Persian descent. collector of the Mu'allakât and of most of Imra-al-Kus flourished mainly under the House of Umayyah, from Yazid II (101-105) to its downfall in 132, after which he lived on under al-Mansûr and al-Mahdi .

and died at an advanced age in 160

Al-Mufaddal ad-Dabbî, first collector of the Mufaddaliyât, an excellent and trustworthy authority on both text and tradition died 168

Khalaf al-Ahmar, a foreigner (Turk or Persian of Farghânah) by race his name is not associated with any special collection, but his knowledge of ancient poetry was most extensive. He is known, and Hammâd is suspected, to have put forward some of his own compositions as ancient poems

died about 180

ancient poetry, were Abu 'Amr son of al-'Alâ, Hammâd ar-Râwiyah, al-Mufaddal of Dabbah, and Khalaf al-Âhmar. as collectors and recorders of traditions, Abû 'Ubaidah, al-Âsma'î, the two al-Kalbîs, father and son, Abû 'Amr of Shaibân, Ibn-al-A'râbî, as-Sukkârî, and at-Tûsî. To Hammâd, who is said to have had a prodigious knowledge of ancient poetry, we owe the first redaction of Imra-al-Kais's poems, besides the selection called the seven *Mu'allakât*. To al-Mufaddal is due an excellent collection of thirty odes, called after him the *Mufaddaliyât*. Abû 'Ubaidah, as a teller of the stories of the pagan days, stands unrivalled: specimens of his narratives will be found in the notes to Nos. XXII., XXIII., and XXVIII. of these translations. Al-Âsma'î added to the original 30 odes of al-Mufaddal 90 more, making the collection in its present form 120; the poems of the six greatest of the pre-islamic poets were set in order by him; and his work as a commentator and expounder of the beauties of the old poetry forms the basis of nearly all that has since been written on the subject. The two al-Kalbîs were both painstaking workers in the field of tradition, and to them we owe the first attempts at a chronology of pre-islamic times, and most of the accepted genealogies of Arab tribes and famous men. As-Sukkârî, besides much other work as a traditionist and commentator, collected the poems of

Commentators and traditionists —

Abû 'Amr of Shaibân	.	.	born 95 or 96, died 205, 206, or 213
Abû 'Ubaidah	.	.	born 112, died 208, 209, 210, or 211
Al-Âsma'î	.	.	born 123, died 215, 216, or 217
Muhammad al-Kalbî	.	.	died 146
Fishâm ibn al-Kalbî, his son	.	.	died 204
Ibn al-A'râbî	.	born 150,	died 231 or 233
Ibn as-Sikkît	.	.	died 244 or 246
At-Tûsî	.	.	died about 250
As-Sukkârî	.	born 212,	died 270 or 275
Al-Mubarrad, author of the Kâmul	.	born 213,	died 282, 285 or 286

It will be seen that the first five names are of men who were alive while the tradition of the ancient poetry was still uninterrupted (comp. the dates given on p. *xxxvi* and p. *xxxviii*, note) Hammâd was brought into personal relations with al-Farazdak and Dhu-r-rummah

the tribe of Hudhail, and added a commentary to them. At-Tūsī, who was a disciple of Ibn al-A'rābī, edited the *Dīrān* of Labīd, from which No. XLVII. of the following selections is taken; the commentary, besides his own remarks, contains those of al-Asmā'ī, Ibn al-A'rābī, and Abū 'Amr of Shaibān. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed in the search for ancient poems and traditions. Arabs of the desert were gathered at al-Kūfah and al-Basrah, and eagerly questioned as to anything they might be able to add to the store of knowledge; later, it became the custom for the learned themselves to visit Arabia, and to travel over the land, halting long at the settlements of each tribe and collecting what they could. In this way the field was thoroughly searched, and the results gathered into the precious volumes which the scholars left behind them, and some of which have at last, in these latter days, reached the final security of print.

The *Hamāsah*, from which 44 of the 50 pieces translated in this volume are taken, is an anthology compiled, in or about the year 220 of the Flight, by Habib son of Aus, called Abū Tammām, a man of Tayyi, brought up in the town of Hims or Emessa in Syria. Abū Tammām was born in 192 (808 A.D.) and died in 228 (843 A.D.),¹ and was himself a distinguished poet. The

The Hamāsah story told is that on his return journey from Khurāsān, whither he had gone for the purpose of presenting 'Abdallāh son of Tāhir, the Governor, with a panegyric, he was snowed up for some weeks at Hamadhān at the house of Abu-l-Wafā son of Salamah. While so detained he profited by Abu-l-Wafā's collection of books to compile therefrom the *Hamāsah*, and left it behind him as a present to his host. The book, on becoming known to the learned some time later, was greatly admired, and a large number of com-

¹ Both dates are variously given. For his birth, besides 192, 172, 188, and 190 are mentioned, for his death, besides 228, 229, 231 and 232.

mentaries have been written upon it by different scholars. The one by the help of which the following translations have been made is the work of Abū Zakariyā Yahyā at-Tibrīzī, who died in 502 (1109 A.D.). The *Hamāsah* contains 884 poems or fragments, and is divided into ten Chapters or Books, into which the poems are arranged according to their subjects. The titles are (1) *Hardihood*, (2) *Durges*, (3) *Manners*, (4) *Lore*, (5) *Satires*, (6) *Hospitality and Panegyric*, (7) *Descriptions*, (8) *Journeying and Drowsiness*, (9) *Pleasanties*, and (10) *Blame of women*. The first two books together make up more than half the compilation, and the first book alone is more than three-eighths of the whole, to which it gives its name; *hamāsah* in Arabic signifies strength, courage, firmness, hardness—in a word, all the qualities pertaining to the ideal of manliness as held by the Arabs. Of the 44 poems translated, 17 (Nos. I. and III. to XVIII.) are from the first Book, 11 (Nos. XIX. to XXIX.) are from the second (*Durges*), and one (No. XXX.) from the Commentary, 3 (Nos. XXXI.-XXXIII.) are from the third (*Manners*), 10 (XXXIV.-XLIII.) are from the fourth (*Lore*), and two (Nos II. and XLIV.) from the fifth (*Satire*). The thread of connection which determines the place of the poems in the compilation is often very slight; thus, No. VI. no doubt follows No. V. because both are by the same author and relate to the same incident, though their tone is widely different: No. VII. follows, not because it depicts some phase of hardihood, but because it is a passage resembling in its feeling the conclusion of No. VI. No. XV. comes in the first Book, perhaps, because of the hardness with which the poet steels his heart to wish for his niece's death, in spite of his love for her. No. XVI. certainly exhibits no hardness of any kind, but is allied in thought to No. XV.

It is sometimes objected to an anthology that, from its nature as a choice of the best passages out of a literature, it affords no

fair criterion of its average level of interest and merit: on the other hand, a collection of detached passages separated from their context is liable to give an erroneous view of the artistic effect of its selections in their proper place. The *Hamâsah* is of course in some degree obnoxious to these objections. If, however, the passages chosen are, in their original language, too favourable samples of the whole, they lose so much in the process of translation that the balance is fully redressed. But Abû Tammâm's compilation is not to any large extent a choice of the best passages out of the mass of Arabian poetry. The most eminent poets, whose works have been gathered into a *diwân* or collected edition, are hardly represented in it at all, the majority of the authors whose names occur are otherwise almost unknown, and the verses attributed to them, perhaps, the only ones they are remembered to have made. The book, so far as it contains old Arabian poetry (for much of it is the work of *Epigom*), is thus a sufficiently fair specimen of the general average of poetic power attained by authors not of the highest rank, who made verse because to do so was the custom of the time, and the natural mode of commemorating their deeds or conveying their desires. Most of the poems, again, at any rate the occasional pieces, are probably entire, or, if pruned of a few superfluous lines, have lost little in the process; while, as regards those which are fragments of longer poems, the whole constitution of the Arabian ode of the classical period is such that its parts cohere very loosely together, and thus often admit of being separately quoted without injury to their own proper effect, though that portion of the ode which is omitted from the quotation may of course suffer from the abstraction of the brilliant passages intended to relieve its inferior interest.

The collection called the *Mufaddaliyat*, from which Nos. XLV. and XLVI. have been taken, has been already mentioned, as well

as the *Dihâns* or collected works of Labid (No. XLVII.) and an-Nâbighah (No. XLVIII.). The last two pieces translated (Nos. XLIX. and L) are taken from the celebrated series called the *Mu'allakât*, commonly rendered "the Suspended Poems."

The Mu'allakât This name was probably given to them by the person who brought them together, as the best odes of the ancient poetry, and this is generally admitted to have been Hammâd ar-Râwiyah, the name is most likely derived from the word 'ilk, meaning "a precious thing, or a thing held in high estimation," either because one "hangs on" tenaciously to it, or because it is "hung up" in a place of honour, or in a conspicuous place, in a treasury or storehouse. There is no ancient authority for the legend which has been frequently repeated, that these seven poems were determined by the judges at 'Ukâdh in the pagan days to be the most excellent compositions of the Arabs, and that they were written in letters of gold upon pieces of fine Egyptian linen and hung up in the court of the Ka'bah. On the contrary, there is no reason to believe that they, any more than the rest of the ancient poetry, were ever reduced to writing at all until the time of Hammâd, whose judgment in including some of the seven in his collection has not passed unchallenged. They are also known by the names of the "Seven Long Poems," the "Seven Strings of Pearls," and (in reference to the legend above mentioned) "the Golden Odes."

A work indispensable to the study of the ancient poetry, from which most of the matter contained in the notes to the translations

The *Kitâb* in this book has been supplied, is the *Kitâb-al-Aghâñi*. *Aghâñi* of Abu-l-Faraj of Isfahân. The author, who was a descendant of Marwân, the last Khalifah in the East of the House of Umayyah, was born in 284 (897 A.D.) and died in 356 (967 A.D.). The object of his great work, on which he spent fifty years of his life, was to bring together the poems

of the Arabs, ancient and modern, which had been set to music, and to assign to each piece its author's name, as well as that of the musician who joined it to its melody. After each poet's or musician's name is gathered all the genealogical, biographical, or anecdotic matter relating to him which was to be found in the works of the traditionists, so that the book is not only an encyclo-pædia of Arab music, but also a biographical dictionary of poets and musicians. The original works of the great traditionists Abū 'Ubaidah, al-Asma'i, and the rest, upon which it was founded, have for the most part been lost, and it remains almost alone to represent them. Nearly all our knowledge of ancient Arabia, its history, and its people, is drawn from this work, which was for the first time made generally accessible by being printed by the Egyptian Government at the Bûlâk press in 1868.

In the majority of the translations contained in this volume
 The metres of Arabic poetry an attempt has been made to imitate the metres of the original Arabic, and some account of these is therefore necessary. Arabic verse is made up either of couplets or single lines, the same rhyme being preserved from the beginning to the end of the poem¹. Where couplets are used, the two halves of the first couplet rhyme together, but in the succeeding couplets the rhyme occurs only at the end of the second hemistich. Where single lines are used, each line ends with the same rhyme. No attempt has been made (except in one or two very brief examples) to imitate the Arabian rhyme-system. To do so thoroughly is quite beyond the power of our language, and to approximate to it would require considerable sacrifices of fidelity of translation.²

¹ I do not here speak of post-classical forms of verse

² Some idea of the *tout de force* which is often involved in the construction of an Arabic poem upon the same rhyme may be gained from the *Mu'allakat* of Labid, in which the difficult rhyme -*dmutha* is ninety times repeated, the same rhyme-word never being used twice—that is to say, each verse ends with a noun in -*dm* (not one of the most common endings), in the nominative case, joined to an affixed prounoun of the 3rd person feminine, for which a noun has to be found in what precedes. In spite of these tediums, the march of the poem is easy and dignified, and the pictures which it presents most vivid.

Arabian prosody in its general features resembles that of Greek and Latin : that is to say, the prosodial value of syllables depends not upon their accent, as in English, but upon the quantity or position of their vowels. These imitations, therefore, in our accentual speech, are open to the same objections, and subject to the same limitations, as English and German imitations of classical metres such as the hexameter and the elegiac. Owing, however, to the large number of syllables in most Arabic metres which may be either long or short, these forms of rhythm are more suitable for adaptation to our language than those of Greek and Latin.

The oldest and simplest of all Arab metres is that called *Rajaz*,¹ consisting of iambic dipodia, usually two or three to the line. Of these dipodia the second foot must be an iambus, but the two preceding syllables may be either both long or both short, or the first long and the second short. In this form of verse all the lines rhyme. It is used chiefly for *extempore* recitations on occasions of combat, boasting, and the like. Examples will be found in the stories of Rabi'ah son of Mukaddam contained in the notes to Nos. XXIII. and XXVIII.

A common metre allied to the iambic *rajaz* is the *Kāmil*, the form of which used in these translations is the trimeter, scanned thus :—²



Here in every foot the two consecutive short syllables may be replaced by one long. Examples, in Arabic :—

¹ Except *Rajaz*, none of the names of the metres are ancient, most of them were invented by the famous grammarian al-Khalil son of Ahmad (100–175).

² Except where otherwise mentioned, these schemes exhibit the scansion of *couplets*, the arrangement of the second hemistich is often different from that of the first. The sign || marks the division of the hemistichs.

— — — | — — | — — — | — — — ||
Khalati-d-diyāru, wa sudū ghairā musawwadīn.

— — — | — — | — — — | — — —
wamīna-sh-shikā'ī tafarrudi bis-sādātī.

in English :—

— — — | — — | — — — | — — — | — — — ||
 Still is the country, and I who should not have been am Lord :

— — — | — — | — — — | — — — | — — —
 Ah, woful lordship—alone to lead, no friend, no peer !

Another metre formed of the same elements is the *Wāfir*, which
 is practically the *Kāmul* with its parts reversed :—

— — — | — — — | — — — || — — — | — — — | — — —
 Here also the two short syllables in the first two feet may be
 replaced by one long Examples, in Arabic :—

— — — | — — — | — — — || — — — | — — — | — — —
Fadat nafsi uamā malakat yamīnī fāudīra sāddakat fīlūm dhunānt.

in English —

— — — | — — — | — — — || — — — | — — — | — — —
 My life and my wealth, yea all that is mine, be ransom

— — — | — — — | — — — | — — —
 against Time's wrong for those who showed true my forecast !

Another metre belonging to the same class is the *Hasaj*, of which
 there is only one example in the Collection, No.
Hasaj. III. In this each hemistich is made up of two
 antispasts, of each of which the last syllable may be long :—

— — — | — — — || — — — | — — —

Examples, in Arabic :—

— — — | — — — || — — — | — — —
Safāhūn 'an bani Hindūn, wa kūlna-l-kāmu ikhwānā

in English :—

Forgiveness had we for Hind's sons,^{||} and said 'The men our brothers are
No attempt has been made to give in the English the final short
syllable which occasionally occurs in the Arabic, and the imitation
thus tends to identify itself with the simple iambics of the *Rajas*.

The commonest of all Arabic metres is the *Tawil*, of which
Tawil. there are three forms; the most usual of these is
the following :—

— ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ || — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘

Examples, in Arabic :

— ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ || — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘
Fudhaka ka!^l *ud-dahri*, mā 'dha hūwalun idhū suddā minhū mankhārun, jāsha mankhāru

in English :—

Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ | Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ || Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ | Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘
Against him the Wild Days dash—he meets them with cunning mind :

Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ | Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ || Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘ | Á ˘ | Á ˘ ˘ ˘
is one of his nostrils stopped? he breathes through the other free.

The second is the same, with a long syllable instead of a short
one in the third place of the last foot of the *second hemistich*
only; thus :—

• — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ | — ˘ ˘ ˘

Examples :

Halumma khalīlī, wa-l-ghawāyatū kad tusbt.

Come, friend and fellow, come. for folly is sweet sometimes¹

It is rarely possible to express this modification, in which the
ictus falls elsewhere than on the long syllable characteristic of the
form, in English. With us quantity means ictus, except in some
monosyllables and a few longer words that stand in a class apart.

The third form is catalectic in the *second hemistich*; as all

¹ This line in English wants the initial short syllable—a modification which is permitted in the opening verse of a poem or fragment

final syllables in Arab verse are long, this gives that hemistich the following scheme:

~ - - | ~ - - - | ~ - - | ~ - -

It is rare, except in the oldest poetry, where the forms of the metres are not finally fixed, to find the third foot in this description of *Tawil* take the form ~ --. Examples:—

Wamá uhhmidat nárun lána dñá tásikn, wáld dhámmád jñ-názilina naclád

Our beacon is never quenched to wanderers of the night,
nor e'er has a guest blamed us where men meet together.

No perfect example of this form is included in the collection, though No. XII. is intended generally to resemble it

In dealing with the *Tawil* I have been greatly influenced by the fact that the metre already exists in English as one of the many forms of anapaestic rhythm. In Mr. Browning's *Abt Vogler* we constantly find lines which completely fulfil the requirements of an English *Tawil*, e.g. —

Ye know why the foims are fair, ye hear how the tale is told.
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And there! Ye have heard and seen consider and bow the head.

Side by side with these technically complete lines are others which are really in the same rhythm, but exhibit slight variations, such as the omission of a short syllable in a weak place, an additional short syllable in a weak place, or the resolution of a long syllable not bearing the accent into two short. Of the first the following is an example:—

Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands!

This exactly corresponds to the licence allowed in Arabic of omitting the first short syllable at the commencement of a line. The second is seen in these lines:—

Consider it well : each tone [of] our scale in itself is nought.
 [and] I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man.

If the syllables bracketed are removed, the lines are unimpeachable *Tawil*; but the addition being in a weak place, their presence does not really injure the rhythm. The third is shown by the following :—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the Will that can.

Then up again swim into sight, [ha]ving based me my palace well.

Where these two short syllables come in the English, the Arabic has (in the third place of the second foot) one long, which does not bear the accent. It seems evident that in our accentual speech no injury is done to the general effect of the rhythm by the substitution of one for the other.

Having then before me these examples to show how the spirit of the Arabian measure might be appropriated in English, I have allowed myself a good many licences, founded on the various forms which the rhythm takes in Mr. Browning's poem. The greater part of the contents of this book are in *Tawil*, so transformed; but comparatively little of them accords with the strict laws of Arabian prosody.

Another metre much beloved by the old poets, but somewhat sparingly exhibited in these translations, is the *Basit*.

The following is its scheme in its most common form :—

———— | ——— | ——— | ——— || ———— | ——— | ———— | ———

Examples :—

———— | ——— | ——— | ——— || ———— | ——— | ———— | ———
Wa'inna 'ash'ara bastin 'anta kālūhū bastun yukālu idhā anshadtaħħa qadakħ

Of all the verses which thou hast made the fairest in praise,

is that whereof, when they hear, men say, yea, that is the Truth.

In the second and fourth foot of this metre (— — —) the Arabs are accustomed to lay a somewhat strong stress on the first

short syllable (which in the second foot may be a long one), so as to approximate the anapæst to a cretic (— ~ —). It is rarely possible to indicate this secondary stress in English without making too much of it. The following line attempts to do so—

And welcome thou when the winds blew shrill in dark winter tide.

Another form of the *Bastī* has a spondee instead of an anapæst as the last foot of the second hemistich only. None of the following translations show this form consistently carried through a poem, but some occasionally have it.—

A grāce it is from the Lord that we hate you, ye us.

The *Bastī* in its pure form is exhibited in this collection only by the lines quoted above from the title-page, by No. XV. and the poem by the same author in the notes to that piece, by Duraid's verses on Khâlid given on p. 42, and by those of al-A'shâ' on p. 93; but a rhythm generally based upon the *Bastī* occurs in Nos. I., XI., and XIII.

A form of which the collection has but one example (No. XLVII) is the *Khaṣīf*, though it is a favourite with the ancient poets. The following is its scansion—

˘ - - | ˘ - - | ˘ - - || ˘ - - | - - - | ˘ - -

Examples.—

˘ - - | ˘ - - | ˘ - - | ˘ - - || ˘ - - | - - - | ˘ - -
wā'lā-lāhi turja'hū wa'indal-lāhi u'u du-l-umārī wa'l-qadīr

And to God ye return, ye too: with him only
rest the issues of things and all that they gather.

Of the contracted form of the last foot of the second hemistich the translation has but one example:—

And the pity of Him who is Compassion.

It will be seen that the general movement of this metre is trochaic, broken by an iambic dipodion in the midst; here also, as in the *Basit*, the Arabs lay a secondary stress upon a syllable (the first of the first and third foot) which may be short or long at discretion. This is a metre which seems to have special capacities of adaptation to English.

A very rare metre called the *Madid* has two examples in the collection (Nos. XXIV. and XXIX.). In the first *Madid*. of these, however, no attempt has been made to give any close approximation to the original, the scheme of which is—

˘—˘— | ˘—˘— | ˘—˘— — (repeated.)

All that has been retained of this is the movement of the last foot of each hemistich. In the other specimen the measure of the original has been reproduced; it is—

˘—˘— | ˘—˘— | ˘—˘— | ˘—˘—

(This metre is not in couplets, but in single lines)

Examples :

Amariqun—lam tu'ad? a'aduwun khatalak?

Was it sickness—none to tend? Did a foe slay thee asleep?

If this metre be compared with the *Khafif* and the *Basit*, it will be seen that it is a sort of compound of the two, having the ionic *a minore* or trochaic movement of the *Khafif*, less the iambic dipodion, and the anapest-cretic of the *Basit*, also less the iambic double foot.

Several other metres exist which have not been described above because no example of them occurs in the following translations. In the notes to each piece the metre, when it is based upon an Arabian model, is mentioned, and readers are requested to refer to the schemes given here for explanation when required.

FROM THE HAMĀSAH

I.

KURAIT SON OF UNAIF, OF THE BANU-L-'AMBAR.

قرط بن انيف . كان هو من بنى العبر .

Certain men of the Banū Shaibān had fallen upon his herds and carried off thirty camels : whereon he asked help from his kin of the Banu-l-'Ambar, but they helped him not. Then he betook himself to the men of Māzin, and a company of them went forth with him and drove away a hundred camels of the herds of Shaibān and gave them to him, and guarded him until he came again to his tribe. And he said :

Had I been a man of Māzin, there had not plundered my herds
the sons of the Child of the Dust, Dhuhl son of Shaibān !
There had straightway arisen to help me a heavy-handed kin,
good smiters when help is needed, though the feeble bend to the blow :
Men who, when Evil bares before them his hindmost teeth,
fly gaily to meet him, in companies or alone.
They ask not their brother, when he lays before them his wrong
in his trouble, to give them proof of the truth of what he says.
But as for my people, though their number be not small,
they are good for nought against evil, however light it be
They requite with forgiveness the wrong of those that do them wrong,
and the evil deeds of the evil they meet with kindness and love ;

As though thy Lord had created among the tribes of men
 themselves alone to fear Him, and never one man more.
 Would that I had in them stead a folk who, when they ride forth,
 strike swiftly and hard, on horse or on camel borne !

NOTES.

Metre irregular, only the last line but one corresponds strictly to that of the original (*Basit*).

Both the Banū-l-'Ambar and the Banū Māzīn were sub-tribes of the great clan called Tamīm, whose settlements in the Prophet's time were in the east of al-Yamāmah, the uplands of Central Nājd, overlooking the low country called Hājāj bordering the Persian Gulf. The tribe of Shā'bān was a subdivision of Bākī, son of Wā'il, another great and powerful clan, whose settlements adjoined those of Tamīm to the east and south.

By "the Child of the Dust" (that is, a foundling—one whose parentage is unknown and who is as it were picked up out of the dust) is said to be meant the mother of the family of Dhūll in Shā'bān. Promptness in rendering help was a much-praised virtue of the ancient Arabs, one of their poets (Salāmah son of Jandal), in an often-quoted verse, says

Our wont was, when one came calling to us for help in his need,
 the answer we gave him back was the smiting of our shins.

That is, they were already mounted before he had done calling, and started their horses at a gallop by striking their own shins with the whip—the horses being too generous to require blows to make them go.

FROM THE HAMĀSAH.

II.

MUHRIZ SON OF AL-MUKA'BAR OF DABBAH.

He addresses the men of 'Adi son of Jundub of the Banu-l-'Ambar, to whom he was bound by a covenant of mutual protection. The Banū 'Amr ibn Kilib had fallen upon his camels and carried them away. He called upon 'Adi to do him right, and they promised it him; but when long time went by and they did nothing, he repaired to al-Mukhārik and al-Musālik, the sons of Shihāb, of Māzin, who won back his camels and restored them to him.

A word for 'Adi from me, whereso be the ways they wend
—and he who has wrongs to right will follow, and follow on !
—The laggards in all good deed, and nigh but in empty words,
 to play with the bleeding heart and weary his soul full soie.
I tell unto men fair talcs, how ye have been true to me :
 the hearers, if I spoke sooth, would say—They have done thee wrong !
A slackness is thenus that blunts decision and conquers deed
 and yet came a peace at last, a right that avenged my wrong
I hoped yet—and yet I hoped—for all ye were slow to do,
 as hope waits, though long the term, the birth from the burdened womb.
And why wrought ye not as those of Māzin who worked for me ?
 of those twain who stood my friends, say, which gave the help in need ?
The flesh on their arms stands forth in ridges of knotted strength—
 and some men there be in fight no better than stream-tossed foam :
In battle their faces glow with gladness like burning gold,
 though worn be the lines and lean from many a stubborn field.

NOTES.

Metre Ṭau'il This poem occurs near the end of the Hamāsaḥ, but is placed here because of the kinship of its subject with that of the first.

The author was probably a pagan when he composed these verses, though he seems to have lived on under al-Islām. He celebrated the famous victory

of al-Kulāb, gained by his tribe in 612 A.D. (see post, No. XLVI.), and he also appears as an antagonist of Mīlik son of Nuwairah (see No. XX.) in a contest the latter had with Kaus son of ‘Āsim (see No. XIX.).

Line 8 tells of the righting the poet gained at last, though not from ‘Adī. His tribe, Dabbah, was one of five known collectively as the *Ribdb* (the others were Taim-al-Lāt, ‘Adī ibn ‘Abd-Manāt, ‘Ukl, and Thaur), all descended from Udd, son of Tābihah, which lived in close alliance and mixed up with the great confederacy of Tamīm. He was thus entitled to call, not only on his immediate protectors, ‘Adī of the Banū-l-‘Ambar, but also on Māzin, another branch of Tamīm, for help in his need. The “twain” in line 12 are ‘Adī and Māzin: the last four lines describe the latter only, with a covert reference in line 14 to the weakness of ‘Adī. The word for gold in line 15 is *dānāntr*, plural of *dānār*, the *Denarius aureus* or gold piece of the Eastern Empire.

FROM THE HAMĀSAH.

III.

AL-FIND OF THE BANŪ ZIMMĀN.

Forgiveness had we for Hind's sons :
we said : ' The men our brothers are :
The Days may bring that yet again
they be the folk that once they were.'

But when the Ill stood clear and plain,
and naked Wrong was bare to day,
And nought was left but bitter Hate—
we paid them in the coin they gave.

We strode as stalks a lion forth
at dawn, a lion wrathful-eyed ;
Blows rained we, dealing shame on shame,
and humbling pomp and quelling pride.

Too kind a man may be with fools,
and move them but to flout him more ;
And Mischief oft may bring thee peace,
when Mildness works not Folly's cure.

NOTES.

This little poem is one of the most ancient in the Hamāsa, going back to the time of the famous War of al-Basūs, about the end of the fifth century after Christ, some seventy years before Muhammad's birth.

The author's real name was Shahl son of Shaibān · his surname, al-Find, means "the mountain crag," or "a mighty piece of a mountain." Accounts differ as to the reason why it was given; some say that he was so called because of the hugeness of his stature · others, that he said on

a day of battle to his fellows who were pressed hard—"Plant yourselves against me: I will be a rock to your backs" The Banū Zinmān, his tribe, were of the offspring of Bakr son of Wāl, and dwelt in the central mountains of Najd among their kinsmen the Banū Hanifah

Towards the end of the fifth century A.D. the two great brother-tribes of Tagħlib and Bakr, sons of Wāl, were united under the chiefship of Kulaib son of Rabūtah, who had led them in the great battle of Khazāzā, which freed them from the over-loriship of al-Yaman. Kulub, himself of Tagħlib, was a proverb for his pride; it was his custom when the tribes in spring travelled over the uplands of Najd grazing their camels, to reserve for his own herds the best pastures making them what the Arabs called *hima*, or preserve. Kulaib was married to Halilah, daughter of Murrah, of the family of Dhuhl son of Shaibān, of Bakr, and by reason of this alliance the camels of Muallah and his sons, but no others were allowed to graze with those of Kulub in the *hima*. It happened that a stranger named Sa'd son of Shams, of the tribe of Jam, a stock of al-Yaman, who was bound by a covenant of protection to al-Basūs, went on the master's side of Jassās son of Murrah, Kulaib's brother-in-law, came and dwelt in the tents of al-Basūs, bringing with him a she-camel called Sarāli. This camel went out with those of Jassās to graze in the *hima*, where Kulaib saw it, and, taking it for a stranger and intruder, shot it in the udder with an arrow. The beast fled homewards and sank down before the tent of al-Basūs who raised an outcry at the shame which had been brought upon her and her house, the protectors of its owner. Jassās her nephew promised to avenge the disgrace, and some days afterwards, watching his opportunity, speared and slew Kulaib. Thereupon bitter war broke out between Tagħlib, led by Kulaib's brother Muhalhil, and the house of Dnuhl son of Shaibān, to which tribe in Bakr the contest was at first confined. Hanifah and the other subdivisions holding aloof because they looked upon Shaibān as wrong-doers in the murder of Kulaib. Battle after battle was fought, and in all Tagħlib prevailed over Shaibān. At last the elders of the latter tribe sent messengers to al-Hārith son of 'Ubād, chief of Hanifah, beseeching him to make peace on their behalf. Al-Hārith sent his son Bujair to Muhalhil, and bade him say, "The father of Bujair sends thee the greeting of peace: thou knowest that I have withdrawn from my people, because they did thee wrong, and I have left them and thee to settle the matter between you. Now hast thou attained to thy vengeance, and I adjure thee by God on behalf of my people." Now Muhalhil, when he heard these words asked the lad who he was and he answered, "I am Bujair son of al-Hārith son of 'Ubād, of Bakr." Then Muhalhil slew him, crying, "Die for the shoe's latchet of Kulaib!" Now al-Hārith was the gentlest of men in his day; and when he was told that Bujair had been slain, he said, "A noble victim, if his death has stanchéd our wounds and put an end to our war!" "Nay," they said, "Muhalhil slew him but for the shoe's latchet of Kulub." Then was his wrath kindled, and he said —

" Bujair then was naught as price for a slain man ?
 Kulaib's stock will stint not yet of their wrong ?
 Tie close by my tent an-Nā'āmal my war-mare—
 years long was War barren, now fruitful her womb.
 I was not of those whose wrong wrought it, God knows
 yet to-day must I be burned in its blaze.
 Tie close by my tent an-Nā'āmah my war-mare—
 a load for a latchet—the price is too dear ! "

And al-Hārith called his people together, and joined Shaibān against Tagħlib. A bloody battle was fought at Kiddah, called "the Day of the shaving of the love-locks," because before the fight the men of Bakr had shorn away their love-locks in order that when lying wounded on the field they might be known to their women, who went about bearing water and bringing help. but the wounded of Tagħlib, who were not so distinguished, the women killed as they lay. And Tagħlib was beaten and its strength broken on that day. For forty years the war lasted, and brought great bloodshed and loss to both tribes, till at last it was ended by the influence of al-Mundħur son of Mā-as-Samā, King of al-Hirah, who induced the two to make peace. Tagħlib, however, wandered forth northwards to the plains of al-‘Irāk, where its settlements still remain.

An immense amount of song and legend has clustered round the War of al-Basūs "More unlucky than Sarābi," and "More unlucky than al-Basūs," are much-used proverbs. To these two tribes belonged many of the chief poets of the Arabs, and two of the *Mu'allakat*, those of 'Amr son of Kulthūm, of Tagħlib, and al-Hārith son of Hilhzah, of Bakr, represent the mutual animosity which the war aroused, and which persisted long after the peace.

The poem of al-Find was composed at the moment when his friend al-Hārith of Hanifah was drawn into the war by the slaying of Bujair. "Hind's sons" are the men of Tagħlib, whose mother was Hind daughter of Murr son of Udd, and sister of Tamim.

IV.

ABU-L-GHŪL OF TUHAYYAH.

My life and my wealth, yea, all that is mine, be ransom
 against Time's wrong for those who showed true my forecast !
 The knights who are weary never before Death's onset,
 though stubbornest Strife ply there the dread Mill of Battle.
 Men they who requite not good with an evil guerdon,
 nor do they return for roughness a gentle answer.
 Their sternness abides unflagging, though they be roasted
 again and again in War's most flaming furnace.
 They held with the sword al-Wakābā's guarded meadow,
 —the sword from whose edge flew all Death's shapes united,
 It drove from before them headlong the rush of foemen,
 and madness at last was healed by a wilder fury.
 Not men they to feed their flocks on the skirts of Quiet :
 not they to pitch tent, whereso they abide, in meekness !

NOTES.

Metre *Wāfir*.

The poem belongs to the early days of al-Islām, when the rivalries of the Arab tribes were still as strong as before the coming of the new Faith. The event on which it touches happened in the days of 'Othmān (A.H. 25-35). Al-Wakābā was a *himā* or pasturage surrounding a well of water, reserved by a tribe or family for its own use and forbidden to others, lying on the road between al-Basrah and al-Madinah, three miles distant from ad-Dajū'. In the days of 'Othmān, 'Abdallāh son of 'Amir, of the family of 'Abd-Shams son of 'Abd-Manāf, was governor of al-Basrah and its dependencies, and he gave over the charge of the *himās* of that region to Bishr son of Hazn of Māzin, a branch of Tamīm (see notes to No. I.). Bishr and his brother Khufāf took possession of al-Wakābā, and digged there two wells, called Dhāt-al-Kasr and al-Jaufā, which exist to this day. Fearing lest 'Abdallāh should take them away by force (for their water was sweet as morning rain), they buried them under mounds of earth to hide them. But

the matter reached 'Abdallāh, who demanded of them the wells which they had dug without his leave. They refused to give them up, and were ejected by him from their office. Now 'Abdallāh had placed his uncle Mas'adah of Sulaim over the well of Abū Mūd. This well was taken forcible possession of by some men of Bakr and a company gathered from other tribes, and when Mas'adah called upon them to pay for its use, Shaibān son of Khaṣafah, of Bakr, smote him on the face with his sword, so that he was carried wounded to his house. Thereon the men of Bakr removed to al-Wakabā, as being nearer to their homes and a safer abode, and settled there. And Bishr son of Hazn sent word to the Bakris—"If ye desire to halt here this summer, ye and those that are with you of your tribe, halt and be welcome, but if ye desire aught else, let me know of it. for this is my land and my water" But they replied, threatening him—"If we see thee in al-Wakabā, we will do to thee thus and thus." Whereupon Bishr sent his brother Khufāf and other kinsmen to all the men of Tamīm settled round about, to the Banū-l-'Ambar, to the Banū Yarbū' ibn Handhalah, and to the Banū Māzin ibn Mālik, asking help against Bakr. How these men fared among their kinsmen, who helped them and who hung back, is told at great length, and were tedious to relate here. In the end the men of Māzin rode forth to attack Bakr, and overcame them, and recovered al-Wakabā for their tribe, who still held it in the days of the geographer Abū 'Ubaid al-Bakri, 450 years later, and perchance hold it now. This deed of Māzin is the subject of the poem

The author, Abu-l-Ghūl, belonged to another branch of Tamīm called Zaid-Manāt: his house was called by the name of its mother Tuḥayyāh, not its father, a very rare thing in Arab genealogies, perhaps because her descendants were incorporated in her own and not in her husband's tribe.

Lines 1 and 2 contain an expression which, in various forms, is of constant occurrence in Arab verse. "May I be thy ransom!" or, "May my father and mother be thy ransom!" are its most usual shapes. The idea is that the person so devoting himself (or his parents) takes upon him all the evil in the destiny of the other whom he addresses. "The Mill of Battle" is a frequent comparison in old Arab poetry: 'Amr son of Kulthūm of Taghlīb says in his Mu'allakah:—

"When our War-mill is set against a people,
as grain they fall thereunder ground to powder:
"Eastward in Najd is set the skin thereunder,
and the grain cast therein is all Kudā'ah"

"Roasted in War's most flaming furnace:" compare the lines by al-Hārith son of 'Ubād, quoted in the notes to No. III.

V.

JAFAR SON OF 'ULBAH, OF THE BANU-L-HĀRITH.

The poet with two companions went forth to plunder the herds of 'Ukail, a neighbour-tribe, and was beset on his way back by detached parties of that tribe in the valley of Sahbal, whom he overcame and reached home safe.

That even when under Sahbal's twin peaks upon us drove
 the horsemen troop after troop, and the foemen pressed us sore—
 They said to us—'Two things lie before you: now must ye choose—
 the points of the spears couched at you, or, if ye will not, chains.'
 We answered them—'Yea, this thing may fall to you after fight,
 when men shall be left on ground, and none shall arise again;
 But we know not, if we quail before the assault of Death,
 how much may be left of Life· the goal is too dim to see.'
 We strode to the strait of battle there cleared us a space around
 the white swords in our right hands which the smiths had furbished fair.
 To them fell the edge of my blade on that day of Sahbal dale,
 and mine was the share thereto wherewithal my fingers closed.

NOTES.

Metre *Tawil*, with some irregularities towards the end
 The Banu-l-Hārith ibn Ka'b were a tribe of al-Yaman, and dwelt in Najrān, a fertile valley about 90 miles north of San'a. The tribe played a conspicuous part in the century before the establishment of al-Islām. About half of it was Christian, at the head of which was the noble family of ad-Dayyān (see post, No XII.) They maintained their faith stoutly against the Himyarite King of al-Yaman, called Dhū-Nuwās, who had been converted to Judaism, and bore a bitter hatred against Christianity. In 523 A.D. the king led an army against the city of Najrān and besieged it, on its capture putting to death the chief and many of his followers. The chief at that time was named al-Hārith, and contemporary accounts of his

martyrdom and that of his people, written in the Syriac language, exist, which are an important aid in fixing the dates of events in Arabia previous to Muhammad. The chief was canonized, and appears in Eastern hagiology as St Arethas. The Christians of Najārah sought help from the Emperor at Constantinople, by whom the King of Abyssinia was instigated to avenge their slaughter by the invasion of al-Yaman. Abyssinian troops under Aryāt overthrew and brought to a final end the ancient dynasty of the Himyarites in that region, which they held for many years as a dependency of Ethiopia.

The author of the lines above belonged to the pagan branch of the Hārithīs, converted to al-Islām in the 9th year of the Hijrah. He was the great-grandson of the celebrated chief 'Abd-Yaghfūth (see post, No. XLVI.) Al-Yaman in his time was a dependency of the Khalifate, ruled from Mekkah. As a sequel to the attack referred to in the poems, the 'Ukailis on whom he raided complained against him to the Khalifah's governor at Mekkah, who imprisoned him there (see No. VI.), and, after vain attempts to save his life, was obliged to deliver him up to his accusers, who put him to death. This took place during the rule of the Khalifah Hishām son of 'Abd-al-Malik of the house of Umayyah (A.D. 105-125).

VI.

THE SAME, IN WARD AT MEKKAH.

My longing climbs up the steep with the riders of al-Yaman
 by their side, while my body lies in Mekkah a prisoner.
I marvelled how she came darkling to me and entered free,
 while the prison's door before me was bolted and surely barred.
She drew near and greeted me : then she rose and bid farewell ;
 and when she turned, my life well-nigh went forth with her.
Nay, think not that I am bowed by fear away from you,
 or that I tremble before the death that stands so nigh ;
Or that my soul quakes at all before your threatenings,
 or that my spirit is broken by walking in these chains ;
But a longing has smitten my heart born of my love of thee,
 as it was in the days aforetime when that I was free.

NOTES.

Metre irregular, approximating to the *Tawil*. It will be understood that the persons addressed in the last three couplets are different in each.

VII.

ABUL-'ATÂ OF SIND.

Of thee did I dream, while spears between us were quivering—
 and sooth, of our blood full deep had drunken the tawny shafts !
 I know not, by Heaven I swear, and true is the word I say—
 this pang, is it love-sickness, or wrought by a spell from thee.
 If it be a spell, then grant me grace of my love-longing :
 if other the sickness be, then none is the guilt of thine.

NOTES.

Metre *Tawîl*. The author was a poet of the Umawi Khalifahs, a native of Sind, bred at al-Kûfah. He died towards the end of the reign of al-Mansûr, the second of the 'Abbâsis (136–158 A.H.).

"Tawny shafts." The spears of the ancient Arabs were made of bamboos imported by sea from India. Al-Khatt, a port in al-Bahrain, was the chief place of manufacture, whence spears are, as in this verse, called *Khuffî*. The shafts were straightened by means of heat, whence they gained their tawny colour (*sunr*), with the help of a clip (*thâkif*). Samhar, a man, and Rudainah, a woman, of al-Khatt, had a name as the best straighteners of spear-shafts, which are thence frequently called *Samhari* and *Rudaini*.

VIII.

THÂBIT SON OF JÂBIR OF FAHM, CALLED TA'ABBATA
SHARRAN.

He was at feud with the tribe of Lihyân, a branch of Hudhail, of whom he had slain many. One day he went forth to gather wild honey in a cave situated near the top of a steep precipice, into which he was let down by a rope from the edge of the cliff, while his companions kept watch above. But Hudhail had had news of their coming, and laid an ambush for them, which rose against them and put them to flight. Then the men of Lihyân came to the edge of the cliff, and shook the rope, and called upon Ta'abbata to yield himself prisoner. He began to parley with them, and as he did so, poured forth the honey upon the rock from the mouth of the cave; then he bound upon his breast the skin in which he had stored the honey, and spread himself out upon the slide thus prepared. And he did not cease to slide down thus, kept from slipping by the tenacity of the honey, until he reached the level safe. And he returned unharmed to Fahm, and made this poem to tell of his adventure.

A man must be crafty and wise when peril is round his road,
or else is his labour vain, he follows a luck that flees.

Yea, his is the wary soul, on whom lights a thing to do
and finds him alcit, intent, his end straight before his eyes;

Against him the wild Days dash—he meets them with cunning mind :
is one of his nostrils stopped ? he breathes through the other free !

To Lihyân I said—(they deemed they had me beyond escape,
my day trapped in narrow room, no issue but through their throng)

'Ye give me my choice of two—to yield me and beg for life,
or die and a free man's choice of these twain were surely death.'

'But yet is a third way left : I ponder it deep within ,
and there lies a road, methinks, where craft may befriend, and skill.'

I spread forth my breast thereto . there slid down the rock-face smooth
a man stout and square of chest, and slender of flank and lean ,

And safe did he reach the ground below down the dizzy cliff
 with never a scratch, while Death looked on at his deed ashamed.
 So gained I again my tribe—and well-nigh returned no more:
 yea, many the like case lies behind me, and here am I.

NOTES.

Metre Tawil. The author was a most famous warrior and poet of the time immediately preceding the appearance of Muhammad. His surname, Ta'abbata Sharian, means "he carried a mischief under his arm." The story commonly told of the reason why it was given is that his enemies came one day to his mother's tent, hoping to take him. They asked her where he was, and she answered, "I know not. he is gone out, carrying a mischief under his arm"—for he had gone with a sword under his arm to visit his foes while they were searching for him. He was one of the swiftest runners of the Arabs, and is said to have been the associate of two others equal in speed to himself, ash-Shanfarà of Azl, and 'Anu son of Barrâk, of Fahm. The whole of his life was spent in rapine and bloodshed, his people lived in perpetual feud with the neighbouring stock of Hudhail, a tribe dwelling, then and now, in the mountains of the Hijâz close to Mekkah.

The "Days" in v. 3 are the chances and changes of fortune: as in the Kur'ân (vi. 134): "If a wound hath befallen you, a wound like it hath already befallen others, and these *days*, We make them to come round by turns among men" (the verse relates to the defeat of Uhud). "My day" in the next verse, however, means his life, or fortune.

IX.

TA'ABBATA SHARRAN OF FAHM.

In praise of his cousin Shams son of Mâlik.

Lo now ! I take my way with the boon of my praise in hand—
 straight to Shams, Mâlik's son, my cousin the stout and true ;
 I will gladden therewith his heart in the ring where his kinsmen sit,
 as he gladdened mine with gift of goodly *ardk*-feeders.
 Little he heeds the pain of labour that lights on him :
 many his heart-stirrings, divers his ends and ways.
 Day-long in a Waste he goes : another he seeks at eve
 unholpen : he rides barebacked the steed of alarm and Death.
 He outstrips the sweep of the Wind as it drives in its course along :
 it blows but in gusts, while he still journeys unresting on.
 When the needle of sleep sews up his eyen, there wanteth not
 a warder to watch, the heart of a wary man and bold.
 When the first of the footmen rise to sight in their headlong chase,
 he waits but to draw from sheath his glittering keen-edged blade.
 When he shakes it in the breast-bone of a foeman, there flash abroad
 the hindmost teeth in the open mouths of the laughing Dooms.
 He deems the Wild the sweetest of friends, and travels on
 where travels above him the Mother of all the clustered stars.

NOTES

Metre Tawîl, with some irregularities.

In line 4, “*ardk*-feeders” means she-camels fed on the *ardk*, a shrub (*Salvadora Persica*) which grows abundantly in the Arabian deserts (as well as in Western India, where it is known by the name of *pîlî*).

“The Mother of all the clustered stars” is probably the turning Heaven, by the movement of which he guides his way.

X.

KATĀRÎ SON OF AL-FUJĀ'AH OF MĀZIN.

I said to her when she fled in amaze and breathless
 before the array of battle—Why dost thou tremble ?
 Yea, if but a day of Life thou shouldst beg with weeping
 beyond what thy Doom appoints, thou wouldest not gain it.
 Be still then, and face the onset of Death, high-hearted,
 for none upon Earth shall win to abido for ever.
 No raiment of praise the cloak of old age and weakness :
 none such for the coward who bows like a reed in tempest.
 The pathway of Death is set for all men to travel .
 the Crier of Death proclaims through the Earth his empire.
 Who dies not when young and sound dies old and weary,
 cut off in his length of days from all love and kindness ;
 And what for a man is left of delight in living,
 past use, flung away, a worthless and worn-out chattel ?

Notes

Metre *Wâfir*, as in No. IV

The author was one of the leaders of the great revolt of the zealots of al-Islâm called *al-Khawârij*, or *Khârijah*, during the reign of the Khalifahs of the house of Umayyah. For rather more than twenty years these sectaries maintained an equal warfare against the best troops of the Khalifahs 'Abdallâh son of az-Zubair and 'Abd-al-Malik son of Maïwân in the provinces of Persian 'Irâk, Fâis and Kîrmân, and for nine of these (68 to 77 A.D.) Katârî was their general-in-chief. In 77 A.D. a division arose among them, promoted by a rival leader named 'Abd Rabbihi-l-Kabîr, who carried off the greater part of their forces from Katârî, thus enabling the troops of al-Hajjâj to overthrow them in detail. In this year, accordingly, Katârî was defeated and slain in the mountains of Tabaristân.

The poem is addressed to his own soul ("hei," because "soul" is feminine in Arabic as in Latin) "Like a reed" the Arabs compared a coward to a reed rather because the latter is pithless than because it yields to the wind. but the second is the comparison best known to us, and was also used by them, though more rarely.

XI.

BASHĀMAH SON OF HAZN OF NAHSHAL

We give thee greeting, O Salmā: do thou give us greeting back;
and if thou givest the cup to the noblest, reach it to us!

And if thou callest one day to a mighty and valiant deed
the chiefest of noble men, let thy call go forth to us.

Sons of Nahshal are we: no father we claim but him,
nor would he sell us for any other sons.

When a goal of glory is set and the runners rush forth thereto,
of us shalt thou find in the race the foremost and the next

And never thereto comes to die a mighty man of our line,
but we wean among us a boy to be mighty in his stead.

Cheap do we hold our lives when the day of dread befalls,
but if we should set them for sale in peace, they would cost men dear
White are our foreheads and worn for ever our cauldrons boil.
we heal with our nich store the wounds our hands have made.

I come of a house whose elders have fallen one by one
as they sprang to the cry of the fighters—‘Where are the helpers now?’

If there should be among a thousand but one of us,
and men should call—‘Ho! a knight!’ he would think that they meant
When the fighters blench and quail before the deadly stroke [hm.

of the sword-edge, we leap forth and catch it in our hands
Never shalt thou see them, though their loss be great and sore,

weeping among the weepers over him that is dead!

Many a time we bestride the steed of peril and death,
but our valour bears us back safe, and the swords that help us well.

NOTES

Metre irregular, approximating to the *Bassit*

The tribe of Nahshal, to which the author belonged, was a sept of Tamim, of the sub-tribe of Dâüm. That the poem is pre-islamic is shown by its opening verse, the new Faith having forbidden the use of wine.

Lines 7, 8. Horse-racing was a favourite pastime of the ancient Arabs, and did not cease with al-Islām, although the general prohibition against games of chance uttered by the Prophet was unfavourable to its continuance. The horses were run, as at Rome in the Corso, without riders, the usual number was ten, though matches were sometimes made up (as in the famous race of Dāhis and al-Ghabīā, which gave rise to a desolating war) with smaller numbers; and the ten horses received special names according to the order in which they came in. The first was called *as-Sóbil*, "the outstripper," or *al-Miyalli*, "he who makes his owner conspicuous," the second, *al-Musalli*, "he whose head reaches the crupper of the foremost;" the third, *al-Musalli*, "he who renders his owner content," the fourth, *at-Tálí*, "the follower," the fifth, *al-Murtáh*, "the agile;" the sixth, *al-Átíf*, apparently "he who bends his neck," the seventh, *al-Mu'ammal*, "he from whom much had been hoped," the eighth, *al-Hadhí*, "the fortunate" (by a euphemism) the ninth, *al-Látm*, "the cuffed," because he is driven away by blows from the paddock, and the tenth *as-Sukáit*, "the silent," because he is covered with confusion. The first two are those mentioned in the text.

"White are our foreheads," with wearing the helmet. "We heal with our rich store." when one tribe slew men of another, before peace could be made either the equivalent in blood must be shed by the latter, or the price of blood paid by the former, the poet means that his tribe was so mighty that those who had vengeance to wreak against them were forced always to take the bloodwit, and dared not shed blood for blood (the natural consequence of which latter was the perpetuation of feuds).

XII.

'ABD-AL-MALIK SON OF 'ABD-AR-RAHÎM, OF THE BANU-DAYYÂN.

When a man stains not his honour by doing a deed of shame,
 whatso be the raiment he wears, fair is it and comely ;
 And if he takes not on his soul the burden of loss and toil,
 there lies not before him any road to praise and glory.
 She cast blame on us that our number was little to count and few :
 I answered her—' Yea : the count of noble men is little.
 ' But not few canst thou call those whose romnnts are like to us
 —young men who vie with the old in the quest of glory.
 ' It hurts us nought that we be few, when our friend by us
 is safe, though the friends of most men beside be trampled ;
 ' A mountain we have where dwells he whom we shelter there,
 lofty, before whose height the eye falls back blunted :
 ' Deep-based is its root below ground, while overhead there soars
 its peak to the stars of heaven whereto no man reaches.
 ' A folk are we who deem it no shame to be slain in fight,
 though that be the deemng thereof of Salîl and 'Amîr ;
 ' Our love of death brings near to us our days of doom,
 but their dooms shrink from death and stand far distant.
 ' There dies among us no lord a quiet death in his bed,
 and never is blood of us poured forth without vengeance.
 ' Our souls stream forth in a flood from the edge of the whetted swords :
 no otherwise than so does our spirit leave its mansion.
 ' Pure is our stock, unsullied : fair is it kept and bright
 by mothers whose bed bears well, and fathers mighty.
 ' To the best of the Uplands we wend, and when the season comes,
 we travel adown to the best of fruitful valleys
 ' Like rain of the heaven are we : there is not in all our line
 one blunt of heart, nor among us is counted a niggard.

- ' We say nay whenso we will to the words of other men
 but no man to us says nay when we give sentence.
- ' When passes a lord of our line, in his stead there rises straight
 a lord to say the say and do the deeds of the noble.
- ' Our beacon is never quenched to the wanderer of the night,
 nor has ever a guest blamed us where men meet together.
- ' Our Days are famous among our foemen, of fair report,
 branded and blazed with glory like noble horses.
- ' Our swords have swept throughout all lands both West and East,
 and gathered many a notch from the steel of hauberk-wearers ;
- ' Not used are they when drawn to be laid back in their sheaths
 before that the folk they meet are spoiled and scattered
- ' If thou knowest not, ask men what they think of us and them .
 —not alike are he that knows and he that knows not.
- ' The children of ad-Dayyān are the shaft of their people's mill
 around them it turns and whirls, while they stand midmost '

NOTES

The metre imitates, though with considerable irregularity, a variety of the *Tawīl* in which the second line of each couplet is catalectic.

The author was one of the noble house of ad-Dayyān, the chief family of the Christian Hārithis of Najrān (see notes to No V) Before the days of al-Islām the Banū-l-Hārith ibn Ka'b were engaged in constant strife with the Banū 'Āmir ibn Sa'sa'ah, and fought with them many bloody battles : this explains the reference to 'Āmir (to whom Salūl was a brother tribe) in line 16. In the ninth year of the Hijrah a deputation from these Christians of Najrān visited the Prophet at al-Madinah, consisting of forty ecclesiastics headed by a bishop, and twenty laymen (among whom were 'Abd-al-Masih and Kus, sons of 'Abd-al-Madān and grandsons of ad-Dayyān) After a lively discussion, of which we have unfortunately only the report from the Muslim side, the Christians obtained from Muhammad a treaty securing to them, on payment of tribute, the free exercise of their religion This treaty was renewed by Abū-Bakr after the Prophet's death ; but 'Omar, in pursuance of Muhammad's dying injunction that none but Muslims should be left to dwell in Arabia, removed the Christian Hārithis to Syria, where they received lands near the Jordan in exchange for those they surrendered in Najrān It was to these emigrants for their faith that the author of the poem given above belonged

"Our friend": this word has the special sense of one living under a covenant of protection (*jdr*); it is the same as the "Stranger" of the Old Testament (Exod. xx 10, etc.) The mountain where he is protected is a figure, meaning the glory and great name of the tribe. The same metaphor occurs in a noble passage of the Mu'allakah of al-Hārith son of Hillizah of Bakr (v. 23-26)

And we have stood, spite of their hate, and high towers
 and firm-based glory lift us aloft,
 Before to-day has it blinded the eyes
 of men in which were wrath and demal
 As though the Fates beating against us met
 a black mountain, cleaving the topmost clouds,
 Strong and mighty above the changes of things,
 which no shock of the Days can soften or shake.

"Rain of the heaven" (l 27) · the Arabs compared men to rain for their bounty, and women for their beauty and sweetness "One blunt of heart"—the opposite of *mādi*, "cutting," "keen," going straight to his end.

"Days" (l 35) is the word used in Arab legend for battles · one says "the Day of al-Kulāb," "the Day of Shī'b Jabalah," etc., although the fight may have lasted (as it did at al-Kulāb) longer than one day. In the next line these Days are compared to horses marked with a white blaze (*ghurrah*) on the forehead and a white ring (*ḥyl*) on the leg in the place of an anklet. As horses bearing these marks are conspicuous among a troop, so are the Days of his tribe glorious among Days. So says 'Amr son of Kulthūm in his Mu'allakah (v. 25), using the same metaphor,—

Many the Days are ours, long, blazed with glory,
 when we withstood the King and would not serve him

XIII.

AL-FADL SON OF AL-'ABBĀS SON OF 'UTBAH SON OF
ABŪ LAHAB.

Sons of our Uncle, peace cousins of ours, be still!
 drag not to light from its grave the strife that we buried there.
 Hope not for honour from us while ye heap upon us shame,
 or think that we shall forbear from vexing, and ye vex us.
 Sons of our Uncle, peace lay not our rancour raw:
 walk now gently awhile, as once ye were wont to go
 Ay, God knows that we—we love you not, in sooth,
 and that we blame you not that ye have no love for us
 Each of us has his ground for the loathing his fellow moves,
 a grace it is from the Lord that we hate you, ye us!

NOTES

Metric adapted from the *Basit*.

The author was a near kinsman of the Prophet, whose uncle his great-grandfather Abū Lahab was. The latter was one of the first gainsayers of Muhammad's mission, and is, with his wife Umm Jamil, the subject of a special curse in the Kūr'ān (Sūrah cx). 'Utbah his son was married to Muhammad's daughter Rukayyah, but she bore him no children, and he divorced her when his father assumed an attitude of hostility to the Prophet, after which she was married to 'Othmān. 'Utbah was afterwards killed by a lion, in consequence, it is said, of the Prophet's curse. Al-Fadl was also connected with the Prophet through his mother, who was the daughter of al-'Abbās, Muhammad's uncle. He lived during the latter half of the first century of the Hijrah, and was a contemporary of the famous poets al-Farazdak and 'Omar son of Abū Rabi'ah. It is not known to whom the verses above given are addressed. It can hardly be to the house of Umayyah, the Prophet's cousins and the suppliants of his son-in-law 'Ali in the Khalifate, for al-Fadl lived under the special patronage of al-Walid son of 'Abd-al-Malik, the Umayyāt Khalifah (died A.D. 96). Perhaps it was the family of Makhzūm, to which his great rival poet of the Kuraish, 'Omar son of Abū Rabi'ah, belonged.

"Lay not our rancour raw:" literally, "scrape not the bark off our tamarisk-tree"—a proverbial saying, meaning to detract from one's honour or reputation.

XIV.

IBRĀHÌM SON OF KUNAIF OF NABHÀN.

Be patient: for free-born men to bear is the fairest thing,
 and refuge against Time's wrong or help from his hurt is none.
 And if it availed man aught to bow him to fluttering Fear,
 or if he could ward off hurt by humbling himself to Ill,
 To bear with a valiant front the full brunt of every stroke
 and onset of Fate were still the fairest and best of things.
 But how much the more, when none outlives by a span his Doom,
 and refuge from God's decree nor was nor will ever be.
 And sooth, if the changing Days have wrought us—their wonted way—
 a lot mixed of weal and woe, yet one thing they could not do.
 They have not made soft or weak the stock of our sturdy spear ·
 they have not abased our hearts to doing of deeds of shame
 We offer to bear their weight a handful of noble souls:
 though laden beyond all might of man, they uplift the load.
 So shield we with Patience fair our souls from the sticke of Shame
 our honours are whole and sound, though others be lean enow.

NOTES

Metre *Tawîl*.

The poem seems to belong to the time succeeding the promulgation of al-Islâm. The author's tribe, Nabhân, was one of the subdivisions of the great family called Tayyi, a race of southern origin who held the parallel mountain chains of Aja and Salmâ on the northern confines of Najd. Some of the branches of this race professed Christianity, but their conversion at the time of Muhammad's appearance was very recent.

"The stock of our sturdy spear": the spear is here not the actual weapon, but the stubbornness and strength of backbone of the clan. One says—"the spear of such an one is hard," "there is weakness in their spear," etc. Among quotations in this sense may be mentioned the following from an unnamed poet:—

"Time was when my spear yielded to none that tried its strength
but softness has come upon it from the Dawns and the Setting Suns."

And the following from the *Mu'allak* of 'Amr son of Kulthûm (verses 57-59):—

" In sooth our spear, O 'Amr, has outworn too many a hand
that strove against it before thee, that it should be soft to thee !
" When the straightening-iron clipped it, it stiffened itself against it,
and turned it back on the wielder thereof, stubborn and sturdy.
" Yea, stubborn : when it was bent to mould it, it cried out,
and wounded the neck and forehead of the straightener."

XV.

ISHÂK SON OF KHALAF.

If no Umainah were there, no Want would trouble my soul—
 no labour call me to toil for bread through pitchiest night;
 What moves my longing to live is but that well do I know
 how low the fatherless lies,—how hard the kindness of kin.
 I quake before loss of wealth lest lacking fall upon her,
 and leave her shieldless and bare as flesh set forth on a boar'd.
 My life she prays for, and I from mere love pray for her death—
 yea, death, the gentlest and kindest guest to visit a man.
 I fear an uncle's rebuke, a brother's harshness for her ;
 my chiefest end was to spare her heart the grief of a word.

NOTES

• Metre *Basit*, as nearly as it can be expressed in English.
 Line 6—"Meat on a butcher's board" is a proverbial expression for that which is utterly defenceless and helpless.

The author of these lines belonged to the tribe of Banûâ, a southern race early settled in Mesopotamia he was also called al-Hanafi, because he was a captive for some time among the Banû Hanifah in al-Yamâmah, the centre of Arabia. He lived during the reign of the 'Abbâsi Khalifah al-Mâ'mûn (A.D. 198-219), and was thus a contemporary of Abû Tamnâm, the compiler of the Hamâsah. The Umainah of whom he speaks was, according to al Mubariad, his sister's child, whom he adopted and regarded with great affection. In the *Kâmil* of the author just quoted is contained another poem by him, written after the death of this same Umainah, of which the following is a translation:

Gone is Umainah to dwell where tall stones tell of the dead
 —poor waif at rest in the grave, laid safe at last in the dust.
 O thou—one half of my soul ! how mourns the half that is left,
 athirst for thee, though the tears stream fast and full from mine eyes !
 Ah me ! for her did I fear, lest I should go to my grave
 the first, and leave her alone, unveiled, to battle with Want

But now I sleep, and no Care comes nigh to trouble my rest
at last finds Jealousy, peace, when all it guarded are dead !
This is the kindness of Death—shall I deny him his due ?
Peace has he brought me, if Pain be still the chief of his gifts

This rendering is also in the *Baett*, the measure of the original.

As a late poet, the author was familiar with the tall headstones and monumental inscriptions of Muslim graveyards: the graves of the desert Arabs in the pagan days were covered only by cairns or flat flags of stone.

XVI.

HITTĀN SON OF AL-MU'ALLĀ OF TAYYI.

Fortune has brought me down—her wonted way—
 from station great and high to low estate ;
 Fortune has rent away my plenteous store :
 of all my wealth honour alone is left.
 Fortune has turned my joy to tears : how oft
 did Fortune make me laugh with what she gave !
 But for these girls, the *kaṭd*'s downy brood,
 unkindly thrust from door to door as hard—
 Far would I roam and wide to seek my bread
 in Earth that has no lack of breadth and length.
 Nay, but our children in our midst, what else
 but our hearts are they, walking on the ground ?
 If but the breeze blow harsh on one of them,
 mine eye says no to slumber all night long.

NOTES

Nothing is known to me of the poet except his tribe. The *kaṭd* in line 7 is the sand-grouse, an extremely common bird in the great wastes of Arabia. The mother bird is reputed to fly enormous distances, with an unerring instinct, in search for water, and to bring it home in her crop to her nestlings. The poet thus compares himself, in his wanderings in search of livelihood, to the *kaṭd*, and his children to her young.

XVII.

'URWAH SON OF AL-WARD OF 'ABS.

God's scorn on the homeless wight who under the pall of Night
 goes cowering the shambles through, and gathers the marrow-bones !
 Who comforts his heart, full rich, as oft as at even-tide
 he lights on a wealthy friend to yield him his fill of milk.
 He lies in the twilight down, and drowsy the morrow wakes,
 and shakes from his dust-spread side the gravel where he has lain !
 A help to the women-folk in all that they bid him do,
 at even he sinks outworn like camel outstretched to die.
 So he : but the homeless wight the breadth of whose valiant face
 glows bright as a mighty flame that shines through the midnight mirk,
 A terror to all he hates, besetting their way with fear,
 while home-bound they curse him deep, as losers the luckless shaft :
 Though far from his haunts they dwell, they image his coming nigh,
 and watch, as his kinsmen watch when one whom they love comes home :
 Yea, he, if he lights on Death in faring his way, a death
 of glory it is ; and if on Riches one day, how due !

NOTES.

Metre *Tawīl*.

'Urwah son of al-Ward was a warrior and singer of 'Abs in the long war which that tribe waged against its brother clan of Dhubyān called the War of Dāhīs (circa 568-608 A.D.). He was a proverb for his generosity, and it was said of him by one of the early Khalīfahs—"He who calls Hātim the most generous of the Arabs wrongs 'Urwah". His very name implies his character: for '*urwah* means those trees and bushes fit for pasture which do not dry up in seasons of drought, and are therefore a resource in times of dearth. He was called '*Urwat-as-Sa'dīt*, "the resource in time of need of all vagabonds," because he never failed to give them of his store, or to find food for them by plundering others. Such a vagabond as 'Urwah delighted to help, and such an one as he despised, are here set before us by himself. These vagabonds, outlaws, homeless men, were numerous in the days of the Ignorance. They were men who had on them the guilt of blood,

and had been disowned by their tribe. All men's hands were against them, and they alone against all.

"As losers the luckless shaft :" this refers to an amusement much beloved by the pagan Arabs, called *al-Maisir*, a game of chance played with ten (or eleven) arrows, the stake being the joints of a slaughtered camel divided into ten pieces. Of the ten (or eleven) arrows, seven had lots attached to them, and three (or four) had none. The arrows were shuffled rapidly in the hand of some indifferent person, and drawn by another on behalf of the players specially appointed for the purpose. As each player's turn came to draw, he used to adjure his fortune to turn out well, and if the contrary happened, received a losing arrow with very bad language. The word in the original for "luckless shaft" is the name of one of these losing arrows. The allusions to *al-Maisir* in ancient Arab poetry are innumerable. The joints of the camel (—or camels, for the laws of the game frequently involved the slaughter and cutting up of successive beasts—) were given by the winner to feed the poor of his tribe, and a rich man often provided the animals required to play the game from his own herds. Hence one of the commonest subjects of boasting is readiness to play for high stakes at *al-Maisir*, and to furnish the animals for others to play at the game. It was played at night, in the winter time, round a blazing fire, the glow of which attracted numerous wanderers, both for warmth and in the hope of getting some of the meat of the slain camel. Muhammad prohibited *al-Maisir*, with wine, the setting up of sacred stones, and the use of arrows for divination, as works of Satan, in ch. v. 92 of the Kur'ān.

XVIII.

SA'D SON OF MĀLIK, OF THE TRIBE OF KAIS SON OF
THA'LABAH, OF BAKR.

How evil a thing is War, that bows men to shameful rest!
 War burns away in her blaze all glory and boasting of men :
 Nought stands but the valiant heart to face pain, the hardhoofed steed,
 The ring-mail set close and firm, the nail-crowned helms and the spears,
 And onset again after rout, when men shrunk from the serried array—
 Then, then, full away all the vile, the huclings, and Shame is strong !
 War girds up her skirts before them, and Evil unmixed is bare.
 For their hearts were for maidens veiled, not for driving the gathered spoil :
 Yea, evil the heirs we leave, sons of Yashkur and al-Lakāh !

But let flee her foes who will, no flinching for me, son of Kais !
 O children of Kais, stand firm before her, gain peace or give
 Who seeks flight before her face, his Doom stands and bars the road.
 Away ! Death allows no quitting of place, and brands are bare !
 What is life for us when the Uplands and valleys are ours no more ?
 Ah, where are the mighty now, the spears and the generous hands ?

Norrs

Each of the long lines of the translation corresponds to a couplet in the original, the metre of which is not imitated

This poem, like No III., belongs to that period in the War of al-Basūs when the divisions of Bakr which were fighting with Taghbib were being worsted by the latter, and were compelled to have recourse to al-Hārith son of 'Ubād of Hanifah, who had till then stood aloof, for assistance. Sa'd, chief of the house of Kais son of Tha'laba, and grandfather of the famous poet Tarafah, had stood by Sha'bān in the battles which the latter lost; and these lines are his indignant remonstrance with the Bakrites who did not join with their brothers in the common cause: the clans are named in line 9, viz. Yashkur (to which tribe the poet al-Hārith son of Hillizah, author

of the Mu'allakah, belonged), and al-Lakâh, another name for Hanifah, meaning "the tribe that does not submit to kings"

Line 4—"Ring-mail": coats of mail, generally imported from Persia, were highly prized by the Arabs, who wore them long and flowing. "Nail-crowned helms:" their helmets, in shape something like an ostrich's egg, were made of plates of iron clamped together with nails: as a circle of these held the top to the side-pieces, the helmet is said to be "crowned" by the row of projecting heads of the nails. With the equipment of Sa'd's warrior described in these lines compare the words of 'Amr son of Ma'dikarib, a great champion in the early wars of al-Islâm:—

I gathered to meet the chances of Time
 a hauberk flowing, a swift strong steed,
Stout and hardy, a grooved blade that cleaves
 helmets and coats of mail in twain,
And a straight spear shaft that quivers when
 I poise it, aiming it straight and true.

It should perhaps be mentioned that *War* is feminine in Arabic, and that in all metaphors relating to her her sex is carefully preserved. "Girds up her skirts" (l. 7): that is, becomes more and more desperate and severe.

XIX.

'ABDAH SON OF AT-TABĪB, OF 'ABD-SHAMS, OF TAMÎM.

A lament over Kais son of 'Âsim, a great chief of Tamîm.

On thee be the Peace of God, O Kais son of 'Âsim, and
 His mercy, the manifold, so long as He will it shew !
 —The greeting of one whom thou hast left here the mark of Death,
 who went far away, and comes to greet thee though in thy grave.
 When Kais died, it was not one who went down the way of Death :
 a People it was whose house with his death in ruin fell

NOTES

Metre *Tau'il*, following the original.

'Abdah son of at-Tâbib was a *Mukhadîm*, that is, a man who lived both before and after the promulgation of al-Islâm. He belonged to the family of 'Abd-Shams son of Sa'd son of Zaid-Manât son of Tamîm, and was an object of the bounty of Kais son of 'Âsim, the chief leader of Tamîm in the days of the Prophet. The first couplet of those given above is of course only possible to one who is a Muslim, speaking of a Muslim. The third verse is often quoted as the perfection of posthumous praise. When the Khalifah 'Abd-al-Malik son of Marwân died (A.D. 86), his son Sulaymân recited it over his grave "Be silent!" cried al-Walid, his eldest son and successor; "thou speakest with the tongue of a Devil. Why didst thou not rather quote"—

"When passes a Lord of our Lane, in his stead there rises straight
 a Lord to say the say and do the deeds of the Noble?"

(So al-Fâkhrî. the couplet is taken from the poem translated as No. XII of these selections; Ibn-al-Âthîr, relating the same anecdote, quotes in its place a verse by Aus son of Ilâjâr.)

Kais belonged to a family in the sub-tribe of Sa'd son of Zaid-Manât called the Banû Mulkâ'is. He is first heard of on the Day of Sîtâ (about 606 A.D.), when he defeated Hanîfah and slew Katâdah son of Maslannah their chief. He fought against Madlîhij at al-Kulâb (612 A.D.), when 'Abd-

Yaghish chief of the Banu-l-Harith was slain (see No. XLVI. of these translations). He is said to have been in his family and ten the evil custom of female infanticide, which in his day had almost died out among the Arabs. In A.D. 9 (A.H. 639) he joined at al-Madina at the head of a great delegation from the tribe of Tamim, who in a fit of contempt in verse took place in the presence of the Prophet before a Zirwah son of Badr, a poet and chief of Tamim, and Hassan son of Thabit the poet of al-Madina. This ended in Tamim defeating al-Islam in a battle when Kais was appointed by the Prophet to be the chief of the party or *gadabat* for his tribe, the Banu 'Asad. After the death of Muhammad (A.D. 632), he was one of those who revolted, with many others of Tamim, against Abu Bakr; he is even said to have been a supporter of the party of Sajah, and afterwards of Musallimah "the Liar"; this however is related only by his enemies. He eventually submitted, and joined in the expedition led by al-'Alâ son of al-Haqrami against al-Bahrain, and crushed opposition in that quarter. I have not been able to ascertain the date of his death.

XX.

MUTAMMIN SON OF NUWAIRAH, OF TAMÍM.

My comrade rebuked my grief as we passed by a place of graves,
 and down from mine eyes fell fast a burden of streaming tears :
 He said—‘Dost thou weep each grave thou seest because of one
 that lies in the waste twixt ad-Dakādik and al-Liwā ?’
 I answered him—‘Nay· pain wakes from slumber the pain of old ;
 so let me alone . all thesō to me are but Mâlik’s grave.’

NOTES.

Metre *Tau'il* (first line somewhat irregular).

Mâlik son of Nuwanah, brother of Mutammin, was chief of the Banū Yarbû', a branch of Tamîm. When the whole of Tamîm submitted to Muhammad, the Prophet, whose custom it was in almost all cases to maintain local authority in power, appointed him his governor over his tribe Yarbû'. At Muhammad's death he fell away with others in the great apostasy of the Arab tribes, to overcome which was the first task that lay before Abû Bakr (A.H. 11). Mâlik, with others of his tribe, was drawn away by the self-styled Prophetess Sajâh, who came from Mesopotamia with a rabble of followers into Najd. After Sajâh had compromised with Musâlimah, the anti-prophet of al-Yamâmah, and withdrawn again to the banks of the Euphrates, most of those of Tamîm who had followed her repented of their foolishness, and sent in their submission to Khâlid son of al-Walîd, who had been despatched against them by Abû Bakr. Mâlik, however, delayed to do so, and Khâlid was soon upon him in his country, al-Butâh. According to one account, Mâlik made no resistance, and professed himself a Muslim; he and several of his friends were carried before Khâlid, by whom (or by whose orders) they were put to death in cold blood. This murderer (for Khâlid's commission from Abû Bakr did not authorize him to refuse the submission of any apostate who returned to al-Islâm, and he not only slew Mâlik, but illegally took to wife immediately after his death his widow Lailâ) greatly revolted many of the followers of Abû Bakr, and especially ‘Omar, who pressed the Khalifah to punish Khâlid. Abu Bakr answered—“He made a mistake in interpreting ambiguous orders hold thy tongue from him I will not sheathe a sword which God has drawn against the unbelievers” But he paid the price of blood for Mâlik and those that were

slain with him, and gave back all the captives and booty that had been taken. 'Omar, however, though he respected Abū Bakr's decision not to call Khālid to account, never forgave him this deed of blood, and one of his first acts, after becoming Khalifah, was to remove him from his command.

Mutammim, Mālik's brother, so bewailed his death that it was said that no brother ever wept for another like him. Several of the dirges he made survive, and that given above is one of the most celebrated. After he had recited to 'Omar some of the compositions in which he expressed his grief for Mālik, the Khalifah said—"Would that I had the gift of poesy, that I might tell in such verse of my brother Zaid!" Mutammim answered—"The two cases were not the same, O Prince of the Believers. if my brother had fallen as thy brother fell, I would not have wept for him" "That is the best comfort wherewith any one has comforted me!" said 'Omar. (Zaid, 'Omar's brother, fell in the great battle of al-Yamāmah in A.H. 11, fighting under Khālid against the false prophet Musailimah and the Banū Hanifah. The Muslims were victorious, but at a heavy cost; and the number of the Prophet's companions slain in this battle was so great that it determined Abū Bakr to have the Kur'ân, which had previously been trusted to oral tradition, written down.)

XXI.

A MAN OF KHATH'AM.

A plague had smitten his people, whose chiefs had died, leaving him alone to inherit their authority

Deep was the first draught, deep the next, no stint was there,
 when Time gulped down the great of al-Aswad and of 'Attâb :
 Yea, every hand that was quick to help and free to give
 when the storm-gust whirled the wattled walls of the tribe away.
 And to-day they wander, a trembling herd, then herdsman Death :
 one speeds away to his rest at eve, one stays till dawn
 Still is the country, and I who should not have been am Lord—
 Ah, woful Lordship—alone to lead, no friend, no peer !

NOTES

Metro *Kâmil*, imitating the original In the first couplet Time, or Death, is compared to a drinking camel. The "wattled walls" are defences of brushwood strengthened with stakes which were set round the encampment to break the force of the sweeping winds in the winter season. In the third couplet the tribe, bereft of its chiefs by the plague, is compared to a herd of camels with Death for their herdsman, to whose stall they must all come home, some sooner, some later. With reference to the last couplet, it is interesting to notice how seldom in old Arabian story one man appears as exercising the chiefship over a tribe alone. The tribal constitution was essentially democratic, authority being vested in a council of elders, whose pre-eminence was freely admitted by their fellows, and who were generally the heads of the most famous houses, the most wealthy men, and the most renowned warriors. Our poet, it will be seen, regards his monarchy as the most mournful of all forms of rule.

Khath'um, the tribe to which he belonged, dwelt in the north of al-Yaman, in the great chain of mountains, stretching from Aden north towards Mekkah, called the Sarât.

XXII.

DURAID SON OF AS-SIMMAH, OF JUSHAM.

He tells how his brother 'Abdallāh met his death, and what manner of man he was.

I warned them, both 'Ārid and the men who went 'Ārid's way
 —the House of the Black Mother : yea, all are my witnesses
 I said to them : 'Thunk—even now two thousand are on your track,
 all laden with sword and spear, their captains in Persian mail.'
 But when they would hearken not, I followed their road, though I
 knew well they were fools, and that I walked not in Wisdom's way.
 For am not I but one of Ghaziyah ? and if they err,
 I err with my house, and if Ghaziyah go right, so I.
 I read them my rede one day at Mun'araj al-Liwā .
 the morrow at noon they saw my counsel as I had seen.
 A shout rose, and voices cried—'The horsemen have slain a knight !'
 I said—'Is it 'Abdallāh, the man who ye say is slain ?'
 I sprang to his side the spears had riddled his body through
 as weaver on outstretched web plies deftly the sharp-toothed comb.
 I stood as a camel stands with fear in her heart, and seeks
 the stuffed skin with eager mouth, and thinks—is her youngling slain ?
 I plied spear above him till the riders had left their prey,
 and over myself black blood flowed forth in a dusky tide.
 I fought as a man who gives his life for his brother's life,
 who knows that his time is short, that Death's doom above him hangs.

But know ye, if 'Abdallāh be dead, and his place a void,
 no weakling unsure of hand, and no holder-back was he !
 Alert, keen, his lоins well girt, his leg to the middle bare,
 unblemished and clean of limb, a climber to all things high :

No wailer before ill luck one mindful in all he did
 to think how his work to-day would live in to-morrow's tale :
 Content to bear hunger's pain though meat lay beneath his hand—
 to labour in ragged shirt that those whom he served might rest.
 If Dearth laid her hand on him, and Famine devoured his store,
 he gave but the gladlier what little to him they spared.
 He dealt as a youth with Youth, until, when his head grew hoar
 and age gathered o'er his brow, to Lightness he said—Begone !
 Yea, somewhat it soothes my soul that never I said to him
 ‘Thou liest,’ nor grudged him aught of mine that he sought of me.

NOTES

Metro Tawil For an account of Duraid, see the notes to the next poem. The adventure to which this piece relates was as follows —In or about the year 600 A.D., a company of the Banū Jusham and the Banū Naṣr son of Mu'āwiyah, both of Hawāzin, commanded by 'Abdallāh, the youngest brother of Duraid, led a foray against Ghatafān, and carried off a great number of camels. They were returning from this expedition with their booty, and had reached the border of the territory of Hawāzin, at a place called *Mun'arq al-Liwā* ("the place where the sand-hills curve round"), when 'Abdallāh proposed that they should halt and divide the spoil. Duraid, who was with them, dissuaded him, pointing out that they were not yet safe from pursuit. But 'Abdallāh persisted, and swore that he would not leave the spot until he had taken his fourth part of the captures and shared the remainder among his companions, besides feasting them on a *nakīt'ah* — a camel slaughtered by the leader of an expedition from among his share of the spoil and divided between his fellows. Next day the columns of smoke were rising from their fires, when lo, a thick cloud of dust was seen in the distance. A sentinel posted on the sand-hills cried — "I see a folk coming—their hair is crisp and curly, and their shirts are dyed with saffron" "They are of Ashja'," said Duraid, "I care not for them." "I see others," said the sentinel, "who look like boys, they carry the points of their lances set between the ears of their horses" "These are of Fazāyah," said Duraid "And there come also others, dark and tawny of skin, who raise a black cloud of dust about them like a mountain. they scour the earth deeply with their horses' feet, and they trail their spears after them as they gallop along" "These are of 'Abs, and Death comes with them!" said the elder brother. Hardly had 'Abdallāh's men time to mount, when the foe were upon them. 'Abdallāh fell at the very beginning of the fight, slain by a man of the house of Kârib, of

'Abs Durud, fighting to the last over the prostrate body of his brother, fell grievously wounded, and his companions fled, leaving the camel, which the men of Ghafirah recovered. When the fight was over, two men of 'Abs, Zihdūm and his brother Kus, with a rider of Fāruqah named Kudum, passed by Durud, who was lying among the dead. Durud, who was still conscious, heard Zihdūm say to Kudum, "I methinks Durud is not yet dead. I seemed to see his eyelid move. Get thee down, and finish him." "Nay, he is dead enough," said Kudum. "Get thee down, I tell thee, and see if he yet breathes." Kudum dismounted and went up to Durud, and examined him returning, he said "He is gone sure enough." As they turned away, Zihdūm pierced with the foot of his lance the body of Durud. By a singular chance this new wound by opening a passage to a quantity of blood which had gathered within from all his hurt, and thus releasing the sufficer proved to be the means of saving Durud's life. When at nightfall the enemy returned home, he digged himself towards the lands of his tribe and met a wandering band of the Hawazin, who received him and tended him until his wounds were healed. Some time after, several men of 'Abs and Iwānah, on their way to Mekkah during the month of pilgrimage, passed through the country where Durud dwelt. Although it was the time when war was forbidden they did not feel wholly secure, and had hidden their faces in their handkerchiefs leaving only their eyes visible. Durud perceived them and went forth to meet them. "What men are ye?" he asked. "Is it I of whom thou art seek?" said one of the travellers. Durud recognized the voice of Kudum. "Not of thee nor of those with thee!" he cried—"Never shall I need to ask who ye are!" Then he embraced him, and gave him a horse, a sword, and a lance, and said "This is in requital for what thou didst for me on the day of al-Liwā."

'Arid is said to have been another name of Abd allāh, Durud's brother, while the "House of the Black Mother" is explained as Durud's own family, his mother Rukniah being a woman from al-Yamān where Africa in blood largely mingled with Asia. "Pāsiyān mūl" see notes to No. LXVIII. Ghaziyah was an ancestor of Durud's, as will be seen by his genealogy given in the notes to the next poem; the name is used here for the family in Jushā'ah to which the pony belonged. The weaver's "comb" is the instrument with which he pushes up the thick ribs of the woof into the web, so as to make the fibres close. In the next verse is a reference to a custom still well known in India, and doubtless elsewhere also when a she-camel's young one, or a cow's calf, has died, the herdsmen makes a dummy from the skin of the dead beast, stuffed with straw, and casts it before the mother when he wishes to induce her to yield her milk.

XXIII.

DURAID SON OF AS-SIMMAH.

'Weepest thou not,' said she, 'for thy brother?' Ay, and sooth enough
 cause there is for tears, but that my frame was builded to endure.
 'Whom wouldest thou that I should weep for,' said I,—'Abdallāh the dear,
 or the slain of Abū Bakar, he whose grave is on the height,
 'Or that other, 'Abd-Yaghūth, round whom the ravens croak and hop?
 sore bereavement, load of sorrow—one grave filled, another dug!
 'Slaughter chose from all men born the race of Simmah for her own:
 they chose her, and would none other so fate goes to fated end.
 'Yea, and if our blood be ever end and aim of vengeful hands,
 striving day by day to spill it till the days shall be no more,
 'Flesh to feed the Sword aye we, and unrepining meet our doom:
 well we feed him, slain or slaying, joyfully he takes our food!
 'Hearts are cured of rancour-sickness, whether men against us war,
 or we carry death among them dying, slaying, healing comes!
 'So we halve our days between us, we and all men else our foes:
 no day passes but it sees us busy with this deed or that'

NOTES

Duraid is one of the most striking figures in the last decades of pagan Arabia. He belonged to the great division of Ma'addieh Arabs called Hawazin, being son of Mu'awiyah, surnamed as Simmah, son of al-Hāith, son of Mu'awiyah the elder, son of Bakr, son of 'Ilkāh (or 'Alkamah), son of Khuzā'ah, son of Ghaziyah, son of Jusham, son of Bakr, son of Hawazin. Abū 'Ubaidah, the best authority on the traditions of the pre-Islamic Arabs, says of him: "Duraid son of as-Simmah was the chief of the Banū Jusham, and their warrior and captain in battle a victorious man, fortunate in his plans. He made near a hundred expeditions in his life, and was not unsuccessful in a single one of them. He reached al-Islām, but did not embrace it; he went out with his tribe on the Day of Hunain, giving support to the polytheists; for then he had no more strength for war, and they brought him into battle only that they might have the benefit of his good

luck, and enlighten themselves from his wisdom. But Mālik son of 'Auf, their captain, hindered them from accepting his counsel, and spoke against him, not wishing that he should have the glory of the day if they proved victorious. Duraid was slain that day in his paganism."

He must have been born about 535 A.D., for the battle of Hunain where he met his death was fought in January, 630, and we have some verses of his composed some time before in which he speaks of himself as close upon a hundred years old. His father as-Simmah was one of the leaders of Hawāzin in the Sacreligious Wars (580 to 590). His mother was named Raihānah—she was a daughter of Ma'dikarib of the tribe of Zubaid, in al-Yaman, and a much older sister of the famous warrior and boaster 'Amr son of Ma'dikarib. Duraid was the eldest of five brethren, of whom 'Abdallāh was the youngest—the others were 'Abd-Yaghūth, Kais, and Khālid. All four met their deaths in fight before him. How 'Abdallāh was slain has just been told. Duraid's grief for him provoked his wife Umm Ma'bād to rebuke him for its excess, and Duraid divorced her on the spot. He took stern vengeance for 'Abdallāh, visiting each of the tribes of Ghatafan one after another, and slaying in requital men of 'Abs, Fazārah, and Tha'labah son of Sa'd. 'Abd-Yaghūth was killed by a man of the Banū Ghairdh ibn Muriah of Dhubyān. Kais was slain by men of Abū Bakr ibn Kilāb, a subdivision of the great tribe of 'Amr son of Sa'sa'ah. Khālid was slain in a raid upon a people of al-Yaman called Azd Shānt'ah, which was otherwise very successful. In the poem above given there is an alternative reading for line 5—

Or that other, 'Abd-Yaghūth, or Khālid, comrade lief and dear

Duraid made an elegy on the death of Khālid, the opening verses of which run thus (metre *Basīf*):

O Khālid—welcome wast thou in council, welcome at play,
and welcome thou, when the winds blew shrill in dark wintertide!
Thou stay when travel was sore, thy comrades faint as they rode!
Thou to whom flocked all the tribe when food was scanty and dear!
Thou of the void and the deed—thou life to all who had need!
Thou around whom swung the War, and pressed with deadliest grip!

According to some, Khālid was Duraid's uncle, not his brother. Duraid left a daughter and a son, but the latter was killed almost immediately after his father: having been taken prisoner at Autās on the Day of Hunain, he was put to death in retaliation for Abū 'Amr al-Ash'āfi, the leader of the Muslim army, whom he had killed with an arrow. His daughter's name was 'Amrah—she made some dinges on her father which have survived.

✓ Duraid, after divorcing Umm Ma'bād, chanced to pass one day by the tents of Sulaim, where he saw al-Khansā the daughter of 'Amr son of ash-Shuraid, the chief of the tribe. This lady, who was a famous poetess (indeed the most distinguished poetess among the Arabs), was engaged in

the unpoetical occupation of anointing a sick camel of her father's with pitch, and had removed most of her clothing in order to be more at her ease in the work. Duraid watched her, himself unseen, and, although he was then about seventy years of age, fell violently in love with her. He made some verses upon her which are excessively comical in their allusions to his passion, the pitch-anointed camel, and al-Khansâ's charms, and next day paid a visit to her father and formally asked her in marriage. 'Amr said to him "Welcome to thee, Abû Kuirah; verily thou art a noble man, against whose dignity there is no reproach,—a lord not to be turned away from his desire, and a stallion not to be smitten on the nose. But this woman has a spirit like no other of her sex. I will mention thee to her, but she must dispose of herself as she pleases." Then he went into the inner tent where his daughter was (separated only by a curtain from the outer), so that Duraid could hear all that passed), and said—"O Khansâ! there has come to thee the Knight of Hawâzin, the Lord of the Banû Jusham, Duraid son of as-Simâmah, asking thee in marriage. What manner of man he is thou knowest well." "Father dear," she answered, "dost thou think I would leave my cousins, who are as bright as spear-heads, and marry an old man of the Banû Jusham, who will be an owl to-day or to-morrow?"¹ So her father returned to Duraid, and said, "Abû Kuirah, she refuses thee but perhaps she will consent hereafter." "I heard what ye said," answered Duraid, and went his way. He made another poem on his rejection, in which he censured al-Khansâ for her bad taste. She was urged to reply to it, but refused, saying—"I rejected him, and that is enough. I will not satirize him as well." This event did not sever the friendship between the family of 'Amr and Duraid, who was the sworn brother of al-Khansâ's brother Mu'âwiyah. Their compact was that whichever of them should die first, the other should make a dirge upon him, and that if either was slain, the other should exact vengeance for him. Mu'âwiyah was killed by Hâshim son of Harmalah of Murrah, of Dhubyâin, and Duraid, besides avenging him, made a beautiful elegy upon him.

One of the most pleasing stories of Duraid is that of his encounter with Rabi'ah son of Mukaddam, of the Banû Mâlik of Kinânah. Duraid went forth with a body of horsemen of the Banû Jusham to raid upon Kinânah, in a valley belonging to that tribe called al-Akham. He spied in the distance a knight journeying along the side of the valley, and with him a lady mounted on a camel. When Duraid saw them, he said to one of his horsemen, "Go forward to him, and call out to him bidding him let the woman go and save himself," for he knew not who he was. So the rider went up to Rabi'ah and summoned him to let the woman go. And when he would not desist, Rabi'ah cast the reins of the camel he was leading to the lady in the litter, and said to her—

¹ A proverbial way of saying that he was likely to die very soon. See notes to No. XXXIV below, on the use of the word "owl" as synonymous with "ghost."

" Ride on at leisure as one rides who has no fear—
 As goes a camel heavily-laden, even-paced
 To shun a foe who calls me forth would bring me shame,
 So try my prowess, see my deeds, and tell the tale ! " ¹

Then he bore down with his lance upon the horseman, and overthrew him, and took his horse and gave it to the lady that rode. Now when his man did not return, Duraid, who was hindered by a ridge from seeing what had taken place, sent a second horseman to learn what had happened to the first. He found him lying dead on the ground, and he called after Rabi'ah, who feigned to be deaf and answered him nought. And the man, thinking that he did not hear, rode up to him, still calling on him to stay. And Rabi'ah again cast the reins on the camel, and rode at the horseman, and overthrew him, saying as he did so—

" Leave free the road of the free-born lady whom I defend !
 Here is Rabi'ah to bid thee stand and touch her not
 A spear he wields that knows him well and works his will—
 What, wilt thou not ? then take it quickly, thus, and thus ! "

And when time went by and neither of the horsemen returned, Duraid sent yet a third to see what had become of the first two. And he rode up to them, and found them both lying dead. Then he looked towards Rabi'ah, who was riding leisurely on, leading the lady's camel and trailing his spear on the ground. And the horseman called to him, " Let go the lady ! " Rabi'ah cast the reins to her, and bade her make straight for the tents, which were then in view than he turned to meet the horseman, saying—

" What wilt thou from a grim-faced frowning foe ?
 Seest thou not there and there thy fellows slain ?
 This was the hand and this the spear that slew ! "

With that he pierced him also, and overthrew him but his spear broke in the wound. Now Duraid began to be much perplexed at the long time that had passed without his men returning; and he rode forth himself after Rabi'ah. And he passed by his horsemen lying slain, and came upon Rabi'ah riding without any spear. And Duraid called out to him—" Sir Knight ! Such an one as thou is not to be slain. But my horsemen will be taking vengeance for their fellows. and I do not see in thy hand any spear—and thou art young . Take then this spear of mine. I will return to my people and withhold them from meddling with thee " And Duraid returned to his companions, and said to them—" The lady's knight has defended her, and slain your fellows, and torn my spear out of my hand there is no

¹ These and the following speeches are in the *extempore* iambics called *rāyāt*: the English imitates the original

prospect of gain to you from him" And Duraid and his people returned home. And Duraid made these verses to tell of the adventure¹ :—

Ne'er have I seen nor ever heard of the like of him
 to defend a lady—a hero he who is not for death!
 Three knights he slew—no children they, unskilled in arms
 —then passed on careless as though his deed had been nought at all,
 With a brow unruffled, a mirthful face unmarred by toil,
 like a shining sword, fresh-furbished, straight from the armourer,
 So rode he, leading his lady's camel, with trailing spear,
 to the right his gaze bent, where his people had pitched their tents,
 While our horsemen trembled before the dread of his deadly lance
 like sparrows cowering 'neath the swoop of the hawk aloft,
 Would that I knew who his father is, and his mother's name!
 Nay, Friend—a man like him is not to be left unknown

And no long time passed before the Banū Mālik of Kinānah, the tribe of Rabī'ah, led a raid upon the Banū Jusham, the tribe of Duraid, and slew, and took captives and booty. And among the prisoners was Duraid—but he concealed his name and lineage from his captors. And while he lay bound among them, it chanced that some women passed by; and one of them looked upon Duraid, and cried—"Ye have slain yourselves and me! Why have ye done us this wrong? This is none other than he that gave his spear to Rabī'ah on the Day of the Lady!" Then she cast over him her gown, and said—"O men of Frâs! I am his protector against you. This is our friend of the Day of the Valley." Then they asked him who he was, and he told them that he was Duraid. Then he asked what had become of Rabī'ah son of Mukaddam. "Dead," said they, "slain by the Banū Sulaim." "And who was the lady that was with him?" said he. She answered—"The woman was Raitah daughter of Jdhli-at-Ti'ān and I am she, and I was his wife." And the people kept him a prisoner, and consulted among themselves, saying, "It is not fitting that the good deed of Duraid towards us should be met with ingratitude." But some of them said, "Nay, but he cannot go forth from our hands save by the consent of al-Mukhârik who took him captive." And the next morning one man helped another until they had made up the price required, and they redeemed him from captivity; and Raitah gave him clothes to wear and food to eat till he came again to his own tribe. And from that day forward he made no more war upon the Banū Frâs ibn Mâlik of Kinānah.

✓ The last scene of Duraid's life, at the decisive battle of Hunnain, the only occasion when he came in contact with the new faith which was so soon to sweep over the whole land, is very dramatically told by the historians. In a II. 8 (A.D. 630), after Muhammad had achieved the conquest of Mekkah,

¹ Metre *Kâmat*.

he was suddenly called upon to meet a coalition of most of the tribes of the great stock of Hawâzin, the centre of which was the strong town of at-Tâif, to the east of Mekkah. The clans in arms against him were Thakif, who held at-Tâif, Nasr, Jusham, Sa'd, and Bakî. the great tribe of 'Amir, however, mainly held aloof, and only two small divisions of it joined the confederacy. The chief command of the whole was given to Mâlik son of 'Auf, of the Banû Nasr, a young and inexperienced warrior. He gathered his forces together at Hunain, a defile on the way to at-Tâif, opening out into the broad valley of Autâs, and brought down there not only their fighting-men, but also their women, families, herds and flocks. Duaïd had been brought into the camp in a camel litter, that they might have the benefit of his great knowledge of war. He was near a hundred years old, and almost blind. "In what valley are ye?" he asked. "At Autâs," they answered. "A good place," said he, "for cavalry to gallop. it is neither rugged enough to wound the horses' feet, nor soft enough to encumber their course. How comes it that I hear the roaring of camels, the braying of asses, the wailing of little ones, and the bleating of sheep?" They answered, "Mâlik has brought down with the men their children and women and herds." Duaïd sent for Mâlik, who came. Then he said to him, "O Mâlik! thou hast become the captain of thy people, and this is a day on the issue of which hang for us all days to come. What means this noise of camels and asses and sheep, and the wailing of children that I hear?" He answered, "I have brought down with the men their children and wives and herds." "Why?" asked Duraid. "I wished to give each man his children and property to defend, that he might fight the more valiantly." "An evil thought," said Duraid, "a shepherd of flocks, forsooth! What folly hast thou done. Will anything turn back defeat? If the day is thine, there will help thee nought but men with sword and spear, and if it goes against you, ye have exposed your wives and children and wealth to shame and plunder." Then he said, "What have Ka'b and Kîlâb¹ done?" "Not one of them is here," said Mâlik. "Then," said Duaïd, "the edge and good luck of the blade are wanting: if it were to be a day of glory and fame, Ka'b and Kîlâb would not be absent, and I would that ye too had done as they. But what is there here of 'Amir?" "Only the Banû 'Amr and the Banû 'Auf." "Ah, the two striplings! They will not do any harm: but they will do no good." Then he said, "O Mâlik, verily ye have done a foolish deed in setting the egg, the precious egg of Hawâzin, to be trampled under the feet of the horses. Take these weak and dear ones to the highest parts of their country, the fastnesses of their tribe. then hurl against the foe men on the backs of horses. If the day falls to thee, those beyond thee will cleave to thee: if it goes against thee, thou hast at least placed in safety thy little ones and flocks and herds, and wilt not be exposed to

¹ The most important branches of 'Amir dwelling in the neighbourhood

disgrace in the persons of thy women ” But Mâlik said, “ No, by God ! I will never do that Thou doteſt, and thy judgment is weak with old age. Ye ſhall obey me, ye men of Hawâzin, or I will run myſelf through with this ſword of mine ! ”—for he giudged that Duraid ſhould win renown on that day and his judgment be eſteemed. And all the people cried, “ We will obey thee, and not Duraid.”

The day turned out as Duraid had foretold. The fight was a critical one at one time for the Prophet’s cause, but in the end he prevailed, and Mâlik fled with the main body of the fighting men and thiew himſelf into at-Tâif, leaving the families and flocks of the defeated tribesmen to be the prey of the victors. Some of the people of Hawâzin took the direction of Nakhlah, and were pursued by the cavalry of the Prophet. A young man of Sulam named Rabi’ah ſon of Rafi’, who was fighting on Muhammad’s ſide, overtook the camel on which Duraid was being borne in his litter with the other fugitives, and ſcized its leading rein, thinking that it was a woman that rode it. He made the beast kneel down, and behold ! there was in the litter a very aged man. And Duraid ſaid to him, “ What wilt thou ? ” “ Thou muſt die ! ” ſaid Rabi’ah. Duraid asked his name and lineage, which he told. Then the youth ſtrick him with his ſword, but failed to ſlay him. And Duraid ſaid, “ Ill has thy mother aimed thee ! Take this ſword of mine from the ſword-case there behind my saddle, and ſmit me with it above the bones of the ſhoulders and below the roundness of the skull. Thus was I wont to do to my foe in the days of old. Then, when thou comest home to thy mother, tell her that thou hast ſlai Duraid ſon of as-Simmah. and many the day I have ſtood in defence of thy women ! ” So the Sulami ſtrick him again with his own ſword, and his head rolled forward, and as his body fell, Rabi’ah noticed that the ſkin on his thighs was as smooth as paper from constantly riding horses bare-backed. And when he returned to his mother, he told her of his deed, and ſhe ſaid, “ O my ſon ! verily he whom thou ſlewefit redemeſed from captivity me thy mother, thy father’s mother, and my mother ! ”

In the poem given above “ the ſlam of Abû Bakr ” is Duraid’s brother Kaus. Bakr is lengthened to Bala, for the ſake of the metre—a licence permitted in Arabic prosody. “ Hearts are cured of rancour sickness ” : the desire for vengeance is represented in old Arab verse as a burning fever, and the ſatiating of it as recovery from a disease. “ Busy with this deed or that,” i.e. warring or being warred against, ſlaying or dying.

XXIV.

TA'ABBATA SHARRAN OF FAHM.

His mother's brother had been slain by Hudhail, leaving to him the duty of vengeance. In this poem he tells how the message found him, of the mighty deeds and great heart of the slain man, the onslaught which led in the end to his fall, the many deeds of daring which Hudhail had to avenge on him, and the stern vengeance taken by himself for his uncle's death.

In the cleft of the rocks below Sal' is lying
 one slain whose blood drips not without vengeance.
 He left the burthen to me and departed,
 and I take up the load lightly and bear it—
 A heritage of bloodshed to me the son of
 his sister, one dauntless,—his knot none looses,
 Downcast of eyes, dripping poison, like as
 the hooded asp that spits venom, the adder

Fearful the tidings that reach us, heavy—
 the heaviest of burthens thereby is nothing!
 Fate has cut off from us, Fate the tyrant,
 one mighty whose friend none dared to belittle :
 A sunshine in wintertide, until when
 the Dog-star burned, he was coolness and shadow ;
 Lean-sided and thin, but not from lacking .
 liberal-handed, keen-hearted, haughty ;
 He journeyed with Wariness, and where he halted,
 there Wariness halted herself his comrade ;
 A rushing rainflood when he gave of his fullness :
 when he sprang to the onset, a mighty lion ;
 In the midst of his kin flowed his long black hair, and
 his skirts trailed : in war a wolf's whelp with lean flanks ;

Two savours had he, of honey and gall ; and
 one or the other all men have tasted :
 He rode Fear alone without a fellow
 but only his deep-notched blade of al-Yaman.

Many of the warriors, noon-journeying, who when
 night fell, journeyed on, and halted at dawning—
 Keen each one of them, girt with a keen blade,
 that when one drew it flashed forth like the lightning—
 They were tasting of sleep by sips, when as
 they nodded, thou didst fight them, and they were scattered !
 Vengeance we did on them thereto escaped us
 of the two houses none save the fewest.

And if Hudhail broke the edge of his sword-blade—
 many the notch that Hudhail gained from him !
 Many the time that he made them kneel down on
 jagged rocks where the hoof is worn with running !
 Many the morning he fell on their shelter,
 and after slaughter came plunder and spoiling !

Hudhail has been burned by me, one valiant
 whom Evil tires not though they be wearied—
 Whose spear drinks deep the first draught, and thereon
 drinks deep again of the blood of foemen.
 Forbidden was wine, but now is it lawful
 hard was the toil that made it lawful !
 Reach me the cup, O Sawâd son of 'Âmir :
 spent is my body with grief for mine uncle.
 To Hudhail we gave to drink Death's goblet,
 whose dregs are disgrace and shame and dishonour }
 The hyena laughs over the slain of Hudhail, and
 the wolf—see thou—grins by their corpses,
 And the vultures flap their wings, full-bellied
 treading their dead, too gorged to leave them.

NOTES.

No attempt has been made to imitate closely the metre of the original, which is too abrupt, and depends too much upon quantitative effects, to be capable of adequate rendering in an accentual speech like English. The authorship of this poem is disputed some think it to be the composition of a famous imitator of the poems of the ancients named Khalaf al-Ahmar, who died about A.D. 180. But whether an imitation or a genuine old poem, there can be no doubt that the piece breathes the true spirit of the pagan Arab. Albert Schultens says of it—“Nobile hoc carmen . . . monumentum est illustre laudationum quibus Fortium fortia facta concelebrii solebant. Magnis splendet ornamentis ac luminibus, quoꝝ gentis genium graphice pingunt.” Goethe has rendered it in the Appendix to his *West-Oestlicher Diwan* (where it is the only specimen of old Arab poetry which he gives), and writes of it thus “Wenig bedarf es, um sich über dieses Gedicht zu verständigen. Die Grosse des Characters, der Ernst, die eechtmässige Grausamkeit des Handelns, sind hier eigentlich das Mark der Poesie. Die zwei ersten Strophen [the couplets in the version given above] geben die klare Exposition, in der dritten und vierten spricht der Todte und legt seinem Verwandten die Last auf, ihn zu rächen. Die sechste und siebente schliesst sich dem Sinne nach an die ersten, sie stehen lyrisch versetzt; die siebente bis diezehnte erhebt den Eischlagencn, dass man die Grosse seines Verlustes empfinde. Die vierzehnte bis siebzehnte Strophe schildert die Expedition gegen die Feinde, die achtzehnte führt wieder rückwärts; die neunzehnte und zwanzigste konnte gleich nach den beiden ersten stehen. Die einundzwanzigste und zweiundzwanzigste konnte nach der siebzehnten Platz finden; sodann folgt Siegeslust und Genuss beim Gastmahl, den Schluss aber macht die furchtbare Freude die elegten Feinde, Hyänen und Geysen zum Raube, vor sich liegen zu sehen—Hochst merkwürdig erscheint uns bei diesem Gedicht, dass die reine Prosa der Handlung durch Transposition der einzelnen Ereignisse poetisch wird. Dadurch, und dass das Gedicht fast alles aussern Schmucks entmangelt, wird der Ernst desselben erhöht, und wer sich recht hineinliest, muss das Geschehene, von Anfang bis zu Ende, nach und nach vor der Einbildungskraft aufgebaut erblicken.” Goethe probably worked upon a Latin translation of the poem published in 1814 by the late Dr G. W. Freytag, and in the masterly description of its parts quoted above he has in some few particulars been misled by errors of the translator. Couplets three and four are not the words of the dead man, but the description of the avenger by himself. The fourteenth to seventeenth couplets do not seem to relate to the vengeance taken by the nephew for his uncle, but to be a reference to previous expeditions against Hudhail which the two undertook in company. It is indeed possible that there may be some dislocation of the parts of the original—the opening verse, which, according to custom, should exhibit the double rhyme, appears

to be what is now the fifth couplet, but as the order and text now stand, the poem cannot be translated otherwise than as in the version above.

"Whose blood drips not without vengeance" the Arabs used to say, when a man's blood went for nought, without blood-wit or vengeance, that it was "shed as the dew," which has no effect in enriching the earth; this is the phrase used here "His knot none loosens": a proverbial expression for one who is irresistible in battle, not to be turned from his purpose. The description of the warrior as a deadly serpent in the next verse recalls many such names as *as-Simmah*, "the deaf adder," the surname of the father of Duraid, *Ardlīm*, "the spotted serpents," the name of the family in Taghib to which 'Amr son of Kulthūm belonged, etc. "Whose friend" i.e. client, one who is the subject of a covenant of protection (the "Stranger" of the Old Testament). compare the fifth verse of No XII above "Lean-sided and thin": the hero of old Arab days was lean of side and flank (though broad and full of chest see the seventh verse of No VIII above) for two reasons first, because of the hardships he endured and the laborious life he spent in the quest of glory, and secondly, because his generosity led him always to prefer his friends to himself in the distribution of food. "Weariness" see the whole tenor of No VIII. above, by the same poet "His skirts tailed" in days of peace and quiet the Arabs allowed their *isdr* or waist-wrapper to trail on the ground in war they girt it tight about their loins "A wolf's whelp". the word properly means a hybrid between the wolf and the hyena, with the fierceness of both "Noon-journeying" the mode of journeying in the Desert, from noon to sunset and through the night, halting for rest about dawn, here described, will be familiar to all readers of M. Palgrave's "Central and Eastern Arabia." The dawn, when rest is being taken, is thus the favourite time for a sudden onslaught, as hero and in verse 20 below "Two houses" two tribes in Hudhail members from which made up the party we do not know their names Hudhail was a much divided clan "Broke the edge of his sword-blade," i.e. overthrew him "To make one kneel down on a rough kneeing-place" is a proverbial expression, used originally of camels, for treating with severity "Shelter": some such temporary defence against the weather as is described in v. 2 of No XXI "Burned," i.e. scathed, an expression used specially for war; compare al-Hārith's phrase in verse 3 of the poem by him given in the notes to No III above, and the powerful description of War in Zuhair's *Mu'allakah* (No L below), v. 30. "Drinks deep" this phrase, used originally of camels at a watering-place, is of constant occurrence to describe the thrust and thrust again of spears "Forbidden was wine": the old Arabs used to vow to abstain from all luxuries until they had slaked their vengeance, when the forbidden things became again lawful. "Son of 'Amir": in the original "Son of 'Amr": 'Amir is used for the metre's sake.

XXV

KHALAF SON OF KHALĪFAH

I reprove my soul when no man is by for every smile :
 yea, a man may laugh, and be sick at heart with a sorrow soic.
 In ad-Dair they lie, my lost ones many another too
 knows well the pain al-Musallā hides in its slope of graves !
 Hillocks, around them a many like, and if thou go there,
 they will feed thee full of the bread of woe though they stir no whit.
 Far away enough are we from thee, since it reeks thee nought
 how days fly here, nor we know aught sure how they go with thee !

NOTES

Metre *Kāmil* The author was an inhabitant of al-Madinah, and is mentioned as an authority on the traditions respecting the Prophet. Ad-Dair in v. 2 is apparently the name of the place where his dear ones were buried, it is the usual word for a Christian monastery; possibly there was one at al-Madinah before the Prophet's time (since that town stood in very close relations to the Kings of Ghassān in Syria, who were Christians and built many monasteries), which may have been turned into a burial-ground after the triumph of al-Islām. The chief cemetery in al-Madinah was called Bakī' al-Gharkad, or "the slope of al-Gharkad," a hill-side at the top of which stood a small mosque called al-Musallā; this is the burial-place referred to in v. 2.

XXVI.

'ABDALLĀH SON OF THA'LĀBAH, OF HANĪFAH.

Before the door of each and all a slumber-place is ready set ·
men wane and dwindle, and the graves in number grow from day to day ;
And ever more and more out-worn the traces fade of hearth and home,
and ever yonder for some dead is newly built a house of clay.
Yea, neighbours are they of the living near and close their fellowship ;
but if thy soul would seek their converse, thou must seek it far away

NOTES.

These verses are frequently quoted, but I have not been able to ascertain their exact date. The author's tribe, Hanifah, dwelt in al-Yamāmah or Central Najd, and was one of the most powerful in Arabia till it was broken by Khālid son of al-Walid in A.H. 11, at the defeat and death of Musālimah.

XXVII.

MUWAILIK AL-MAZMŪM.

Take thou thy way by the grave wherein thy dear one lies
 —Umm-al-'Alâ,—and lift up thy voice : ah if she could hear !
 How art thou come—for very fearful wast thou—to dwell
 in a land where not the most valiant goes but with quaking heart ?
 God's love be thine and his mercy, O thou dear lost one !
 not meet for thee is the place of shadow and loneliness.
 And a little one hast thou left behind—God's ruth on her !
 She knows not what to bewail thee means, yet weeps for thee ;
 For she misses those sweet ways of thine that thou hadst with her,
 and the long night wails, and we strive to hush her to sleep in vain.
 When her crying smites in the night upon my sleepless ears,
 straightway mine eyes brimfull are filled from the well of tears

NOTES.

Metre *Kâmil*. I have not been able to ascertain anything regarding the author of these lines, who may perhaps have been a contemporary of the compiler of the Hamâsa (about 220 A.H.). *Muwâlik* is the diminutive of *Mâlik*. *Al-Mazmûm* means “the bridled”—perhaps a nickname given for some peculiarity of feature. Umm-al-'Alâ was his wife, whose loss he mourns.

XXVIII.

HAFS SON OF AL-AHNAF, OF KINĀNAH.

(Or some other the verses are ascribed to many different poets. For their history see below)

Bide still with us, O Rabi'ah son of Mukaddam, near—
 may the clouds of dawn keep green thy grave with unfailing showers !
 My camel fled when she spied the cairn on the stony waste
 built over one who was free of hand, most quick to give.
 Start not, O Camel, for sue no shape to be shunned was he,
 a carouser mirthful, a mighty stirrer of battle-flame
 Long is my way, and the thirsty desert before me lies,
 else here for thee she had fallen, butchered to feast thy friends !

NOTES

Metre *Kāmil*, as in the original

These verses were spoken over the grave of Rabi'ah son of Mukaddam, of the Banū Firās, a branch of Kinānah (to which stock the Kuraish also belonged), the same of whom a story has been told in the notes to No. XXIII. above. The first couplet contains the phrase which at funerals among the pagan Arabs answered to the solemn *litanies* of the Latins. This was *Lā tab'adū!* “Go not away from us! abide near us!” The second line is also a sentiment extremely common in the ancient dirges, both before and after al-Islām. The “Stony waste” of line 3 is the *haṣṣah* of the Banū Sulaim, a volcanic tract “strewn with black and worn crumbling stones, as though they had been rained down.” A belt of these high volcanic plains, of which five are counted by the Arabs, lies along the eastern margin of the Hijāz from the neighbourhood of at-Tāif to that of al-Madīnah, separating it from the interior high lands of Nayd.

A strife arose between the Banū Fnās and their neighbours of the Banū Sulaim, in which a man of the latter tribe was slain. The former paid the price of his blood, and thus it seemed that peace had come again. Soon after this, however, Nubaishah son of Hābib, a chief of Sulaim, went forth on a foray with some horsemen of his tribe, and in the neighbourhood

of al-Kadid, a country belonging to Kinânah, they came upon Rabi'ah son of Mukaddam escorting a party of women, among whom were his sister and mother, near Dhû 'Aṣal, in Amâj (a long valley running east and west between the *haṣṣah* of Sulaim and the sea). When Rabi'ah espied the dust from afar, he said to his women-folk, "Ride ye on quickly for I have a fear lest this should be a party of an enemy following us. Keep ye straight to the road; I will wait here till the dust clears and I see who the folk are. And if I see cause to fear aught for you, I will attack them in this covert of trees, and lead them astiray from the road. We shall meet again at the Pass of Ghazâl, or 'Usfân in al-Kadid; or if I meet you not there, at least ye will have gained the country of our tribe." Then he mounted his mare and rode towards the dust. And his women said among themselves, "Rabi'ah has fled and left us!" And one of them called after him, "Whither will a man's terror carry him?" And his sister Umm 'Amr cried out against him—

" O deed of shame! O deed of shame!
A man deserts his women-folk
While still the blood flows full within his veins! "

And when he heard their words, he turned again towards them, and said—

" Sayst thou, my sister, I am one to quail?
Hast thou not known me join with spear and sword,
And bring my blade back red with men's life-blood? "

With that he rode forward again to meet the men of Sulaim, who were searching the tracks of his company, and did not see him; and he appeared before them out of the trees. And when they saw him, they came on to attack him in a body, making sure that the women were beyond him. Now Rabi'ah was a most skilful archer, and he began to assail them with his arrows until he had slain and disabled many of them. And when he had occupied them thus, he spurned his mare after the flying women, and when he came up with them, he pushed them on still faster. But the men of Sulaim followed him up, and he turned to attack them again. And his mother called out to him, urging him to the fight—

" Charge them, my son! who charges, shields us best—
Keep full their hands from us with blow on blow! "

And so he continued, urging on the women and turning to face the foe, until his arrows were all spent. And thus they reached to al-Kadid as the sun was sinking. And the black horses were following him, their riders full of hate and rage, burning for vengeance. Then he began to attack them, now with spear and now with sword, and to do great slaughter among them. But here Nubaishah son of Habib bore down against him, and thrust him through with his spear, and brought him to a stand. "I

have slain him!" cried Nubaishah "Thy mouth lies, O Nubaishah!" said Rabi'ah. And Nubaishah smelt the blade of his spear, and said, "It is thou that hast—verily I smell the smell of thy vitals!" And Rabi'ah turned his mare, and galloped, wounded as he was, until he reached the women at the entrance to the Pass of Ghazâl, and he cried to his mother, "Give me to drink!" And she said "O son! if I give thee to drink, thou wilt die on the spot, and the men will take us. So have patience—perchance we shall yet escape!" Then said he, "Bind up my wound." So she bound it up with her veil. And as she did so, he said—

" Bind upon me the bandage, Umm Sayâr!
A horseman hast thou lost like burning gold—
A hawk that drives the throng like frightened birds,
Deep diving with his blows before, behind ! "

And she answered him—

" Of Mâlik's stock are we, and Thâlabah's
Thus all men's mouths tell of us evermore—
Now one is slain, and now another dies—
Bereavement is our life from day to day ! "

Go, and smite them while thy strength lasts!" So he went back, and faced them again at the head of the pass, and the women passed on with the best speed they could. And Rabi'ah sat upright upon his mare, bairing the road; and when he felt death coming upon him, he leaned upon his spear, and stood thus in the twilight. And when the men of Sulaim saw him there on his mare, they durst not attack him, and stood a long time, thinking not but that he was still living. At last Nubaishah, watching him, said, "His head droops on his neck! I am sure that he must be dead!" And he bade a man of Khuzâ'ah who was with them to shoot an arrow at his mare. And he shot, and the mare started aside and Rabi'ah fell forward on his face, dead. So the men came up and took his spoils: but they feared to follow further after the women, who by this time had reached the dwellings of their tribe. And never was there known among the Arabs a knight who defended his women both living and dead but he. And there came up to him a man of Sulaim, and thrust the foot of his spear into his eye, and said, "God curse thee! verily thou hast defended thy women both alive and dead!" And when the women reached the Banû Firâs and told them the tale, Musâfi' son of Khalaf, who was Rabi'ah's mother's brother, rode forth with some horsemen until they came to Rabi'ah lying at the head of the pass, spoiled and dead, and they left him there and followed after the men of Sulaim, but night fell, and they could not come up with them. So they returned to Rabi'ah, and buried him where he lay at the head of the Pass of Ghazâl; and over

him they built a cañn of black stones, and set up in the midst of it a great white stone, shaped like the hindquarters of a slaughtered camel. And never there passed by that way any of the Arabs but he slaughtered there a camel, and gave to eat to all who came.

So the Chronicle. The verses given above were, it is said, uttered by some one who, by reason of the long journey he had to make, was unable to follow the custom of the time. They are ascribed by some to Hassân son of Thâbit, the famous poet of al-Madinah; by others to a man of Taimâ (then a stronghold of the Jews), by others to one of the Kuâish. Of the story (which is told in substantially the same terms by more than one great authority on the traditions of the pagan Arabs), it is sufficient to say that the verses interspersed with the narrative are the usual *extempore* iambics called *ayâz*, the simplest form of Arab verse, which men were wont to use upon all occasions of great excitement. The violent expiation used by the Sulami who maltreated the dead Rabi'ah ("God curse thee!"), like others of the kind, is intended for admiration, not for hatred or contempt. Notwithstanding the distinct assertion of the old traditions that no other man was known among the Arabs who died as did Rabi'ah, the author of the late and apocryphal "Adventures of 'Antar" (which is largely made up of stories stolen from others, their rightful owners) has not scrupled to appropriate this heroic death for 'Antarah of 'Abs. The real 'Antarah died in extreme old age, in quite another way than that of "the boy with the long locks," as one of the accounts calls Rabi'ah.

XXIX.

A MOTHER ON HER DEAD SON.

Seeking where Death might not reach long he roamed, and now is dead ;
 And I know not—would I knew !—what it was that laid thee low :
 Was it sickness—none to tend ? Did a foe slay thee asleep ?
 Or some chance stroke, such as comes to the partridge in the waste ?
 Everything is fraught with death when thou comest to thy doom,
 And the Fates he ambushed close where the hero wends his way.
 Ay, the hero—what of praise fits a hero, hadst not thou ?
 —Comfort must I win, since thou ne'er wilt answer asking more :
 —Sure a hard thing binds thy tongue, since thou canst not answer me !
 Easy was all gain to thee, lightly durst thou win thy spoil—
 Would my heart a moment's space could win patience, thou no more !
 Would that I had gone thy way—met the Dooms instead of thee !

NOTES

Metre a form of the *Maddī*. The original is not in couplets, but single lines all rhyming together. Some attribute these verses to the mother of Ta'abbata Sharī'ah, others to that of as-Sulaik son of as-Sulakah, both wandering heroes whose adventures carried them far but their real authorship is unknown. As regards Ta'abbata, the place of his death is known, which was not the case with the dead man here. His sister said, bewailing him—

Far was the warrior whom ye left in Rakhmān—
 —Thābit son of Jābir son of Sufyān—
 Who slew his foe and poured wine for his fellow !

(“The mother of ail Dirges,” as Ruckert calls this simplest form of lamentation for the dead. “Fair,” the same root as the Hebrew word for “Very pleasant hast thou been unto me” in 2 Samuel 1:26.) The piece suits as-Sulaik somewhat better; but as he reached to old age before he met his death, it is hardly probable that his mother survived to lament him.

As-Sulāk was a man of Sa'd-Manāt, a branch of Tamīm, and belonged to the family called Banū Muħā'im (the house of Kais son of 'Āsim, No. XIX. above). His mother, as-Sulākah, was a black slave, and her son was one of those hardy brigands who were called, from their blackness and violence, "the ravens of the Arabs." He was a runner most fleet of foot, and used generally to make his forays alone. These were directed either against the tribes of al-Yaman, or the men of Bakr son of Wail, the hereditary enemies of Tamīm. During the winter season of rain he used to bury in the sand of the deserts through which he projected an expedition ostriches' eggs, containing a supply of water, and in the summer, when no one dared venture across these arid wastes, he would go forth many days' journey and strike his blow, finding again unerringly his water-supply on the road. He met his death among the tribe of Khath'um, one of the northern races of al-Yaman.

"Did a foe slay thee asleep?" note that she refuses to imagine that an enemy could have slain him without foul play. "When thou comest to thy Doom" . . . "thou" does not here refer to the dead, but to man in general. "Canst not answer me"—thy mother whom thou lovedst! "Easy was all gain to thee," i.e. "How easily didst thou win all thou settest thyself to follow, and how hard is it for me to win patience, now thou art dead!"

XXX.

MÂLIK SON OF AR-RAIB, OF MÂZIN, OF TAMÍM.

The verses form part of an elegy which he composed on his own death, having, the tale says, been stung in the foot by a serpent as he journeyed alone in Khurâṣān.

I thought who would weep for me, and none did I find to mourn
 but only my sword, my spear, the best of Rudainah's store,
 And one friend, a sorrel steed, who goes forth with trailing rom
 to drink at the pool, since Death has left none to draw for him.

Notes

Metro Tamîl. The author was a brigand who roamed over the country of Tamîm in the neighbourhood of al-Bîrah during the early years of the dynasty of Umayyah. When Mu'awiyah sent Sa'îd, son of the Khalîfah 'Othmân, as his viceroy to Khurâṣān in A.H. 56, the latter on his way to Persia met Mâlik, and, struck by his noble mien and gallant bearing, invited him to accompany him. He died in Khurâṣān, after fighting in Sa'îd's army, but accounts differ as to the mode of his death. "The best of Rudainah's store": see notes to No. VII. above.

XXXI.

'AMR SON OF KAMĪ'AH.

Alas my soul for Youth that's gone—
no light thing lost I when he fled !
What time I trailed my skirts in pride
and shook my locks at the tavern's door.
Nay, envy not a man that men
say, 'Age has made him ripe and wise .'
Though thou love life and live long safe,
long living leaves its print on thee !

NOTES

The author of this piece belonged to the tribe of Bakr son of Wā'il, and was the grandson of Sa'īl son of Mālik, author of No XVIII. He is claimed as the first of Nīzār (that is, of the Mu'addic Arabs as opposed to those of al-Yaman) who made regular *kasidahs*, and as the master in this art of the great Imra-al-Kais. He reached a great age, and was the companion of Imra-al-Kais in his journey to the Court of the Greek Emperor (about 535 A.D.), whose help the latter was seeking in his endeavour to recover the lordship of the kings of Kindah over the Eastern and Central Arabs, lost by the death of his father Hujr at the hands of the tribe of Asad. 'Amr died, however, on the way in Asia Minor, and was therefore known among the Arabs as "'Amr the Lost".

In v. 2 the translation fails to give the full force of the original, which may be thus rendered—"What time I trailed my robes of silk and wool to the nearest of my wine-sellers, and shook loose my locks :" "the *nearest* of my wine-sellers" shows that he was a wealthy man, and had many to supply him. Wine-drinking was a most prevalent habit among the pre-Islamic Arabs, and no old poem describing their daily life fails to make mention of it, and to boast of the singer's drinking powers, of his generosity when drunk, and the high price he gave for wine to make merry with his fellows. The wine used was so strong that it had to be mixed with water before it could be drunk. It was chiefly brought from the north, either from Syria, from the vineyards along the course of the Jordan, or

from Babylon, but wine was also produced in the fertile valleys of al-Yaman. The poet al-A'shà of Bakr, a contemporary of Muhammad, had a wine-press of his own in the uplands of Hamdān in al-Yaman, at a place called Athāfit, and sings of the delights of the vintage there in the pleasant autumn. Wine was also made at at-Tâif, in the Upper Hijâz east of Mekkah. It was generally sold by Jews, and there are many references in the old poetry to the hard bargains they used to drive; the vintners' shops were distinguished by flags, which were taken down when their stock of wine had run out. 'Anturah, describing a gallant man, calls him "one who takes down, or causes to be taken down, the vintners' flags," i.e. by buying up all their stock.

XXXII.

SULMÎ SON OF RABI'AH, OF DABBÂH.

Roast flesh, the glow of fiery wine,
 to speed on camel fleet and sure
 As thy soul lists to urge her on
 through all the hollow's breadth and length ;
 White women statue-like that trail
 rich robes of price with golden hem,
 Wealth, easy lot, no dread of ill,
 to hear the lute's complaining string—
 These are Life's joys. For man is set
 the prey of Time, and Time is change.
 Life straight or large, great store or nought,
 all's one to Time, all men to Death.
 Death brought to nought Tasm long ago,
 Ghadhî of Bahm, and Dhû Judûn,
 The race of Jâsh and Mârib, and
 the House of Lukmân and at-Tukûn

NOTES

The author appears to have lived some two generations before the coming of al-Islâm : poems by his son Ghuwayyâh, and grandson Kurâd, are included in the Hamâsa, which show them to have been pagans. For his tribe, Dabbah, see the notes to No. II.

"Statue-like": it is hardly probable that the Arabs ever had any very admirable works of art in the pagan time, though we know that they had statues, idolatrous and other. Perhaps the author (and his contemporary Imra-al-Kais, who often uses the same comparison for female beauty) may have seen Greek statues in Syria. Of the names which occur in the last four lines, Tasm was one of the old lost races of Arabia, who dwelt, with a sister tribe named Jadîs, in a valley called al-Jâww in al-Yamâmah or

southern Najd. A quarrel broke out between Tasm and Jadis, in which the latter tribe massacred the whole of the former except one man named Rayâh, who escaped and invoked the aid of Hassân son of As'ad, the Tubba' or ruler of the Himyaites in al-Yaman. This king led an army against Jadis, and exterminated the whole race. Nothing certain is known of the date of this event, and Tasm to an Aïab was but the name of a people that perished long ago. Of Ghadhî of Bahm also nothing is known but his name—he seems to have been a prince of Iram, of the race of 'Ad, another lost people, and is mentioned together with Lukmân and Dhû Jadan in a verse quoted in the dictionaries—

“ Had I been a man of the race of ‘Ad and of Iram,
Ghadhî of Bahm or Lukmân or Dhû Jadan ”

Dhû Judûn probably stands for Dhû Jadan, the surname of a king of Himyar (date unknown), whose name was 'Alas son of al-Hâith. Jadan was the name of a fortress or city where he dwelt. Of Jâsh nothing is known. Mârib is the name of a very ancient city in al-Yaman, the prosperity of which depended on a great dyke which collected the waters of the surrounding hills and enabled them to be applied to irrigation. This dyke is said to have been built by Lukmân, king of the second 'Ad (that is, the remnant which remained on the destruction of the first 'Ad and their city Iram of the Pillars), and on its irrigation a vast area depended for its crops. Its remains are still visible, and have been visited by European travellers. Lukmân and his family, after a rule which, according to Aïab legend, lasted a thousand years, were overthrown by Ya'ub son of Kahâñ, who founded a new empire in al-Yaman which afterwards became that of the Himyaites kings 'Abd-Shams Saba, father of Himyar, repaired and completed the dyke, making Mârib his capital. At some date not now ascertainable (Caussin de Perceval conjectures about 120 A.D.) the great dyke burst, and the large population dependent upon it was suddenly plunged into poverty. This led to a great outwandering of Yamanie races to the north, where they planted themselves in the midst of populations of Ma'addic origin. To this dispersion was due the establishment of the dynasties of Ghassân in Syria and the Haurân, and of al-Hîrah on the Euphrates. The Aus and Khazraj of Yathrib (afterwards called al-Madinah) were among the emigrants from al-Yaman on this occasion, and another great body in the same dispersion occupied the two parallel ranges of Aja and Salmâ on the northern frontier of Najd, where they became famous under the name of Tayyi'. Lukmân was the king of the second 'Ad just mentioned. At-Tukhân, a plural word, is probably intended for the family of two men, each of whom was called at-Tikn, and who were famous archers in the days of Lukmân of 'Ad.

XXXIII.**MĀLIK SON OF HĀRİM, OF HAMDĀN.**

Yea, knowledge I have from Time, the best of all counsellors,
 the passing of days that brings to light wealth of hidden lore :
 I know how the Rich is served by riches, how fair the praise
 they gather with cunning hands, whatso be the blame his due ;
 And how lacking wastes and wears a man though his heart be high
 —yea, sharper the sting thereof than falling of untanned scourge !
 He looks on the steps of Fame—the steps he can never tread—
 and sits in the midst of men in silence without a word.

NOTES.

*Metre *Tawīl*.* When the author lived I have not been able to ascertain : some verses by him quoted by his fellow-tribesman al-Hamdānī in his *Geography of Arabia* (p. 170) seem to speak of battles fought in the days of the Ignorance as if he had been present at them. Hamdān, his tribe, was one of the most powerful branches of the great Yamanic stock called Madhhij, and was settled to the north and east of the Banu-l-Hārith of Najrān.

XXXIV.

ONE UNNAMED.

O God, if I die, and Thou give not to mine owl to drink
 of Lailà, I die, no grave lies thirstier than my grave !
 And if I forget my pain though Lailà be not for me,
 my Comforter is Despair : no comfort does Patience bring.
 And if I suffice myself without her, seem strong and stern
 —ah many the strength of soul that lies near to lacking sore !

NOTES.

Metre Tawîl. Too many of the pieces in the book of the Hamâsa from which these lines are taken (No IV "Love-pieces") want the author's name. The pagan Arabs had a strange and gloomy superstition that the spirits of dead men became owls, which dwelt in the graves where their bodies were laid. *Sadd* and *hâmah*, the words for *owl*, thus came to mean the ghost of a dead man, and are often used where there does not appear to be any idea that the speaker is likely to die unavenged. But some say that the superstition was that only the souls of those slain without vengeance became owls, and that they flew at night about the grave, crying *ishâ'ût, ishâ'ût*—"Give me to drink, give me to drink!" When the blood of vengeance was shed, the thirst of the owl was quenched, and he ceased to cry. This appears to be the meaning here, and the more restricted notion may have existed among some tribes, the wider (that *all* ghosts were owls) among others. The poet conceives himself as slain by love for Lailà, and his ghost as thirsting for her as his slayer, and requiring to be appeased by her blood. These verses appear to be decidedly pagan; but, although the Prophet expressly denounced the superstition as baseless, we have evidence in the poetry of the time that it, or language having reference to it, survived long after the establishment of al-Islâm (see No. XLII).

XXXV.

ABŪ ŠAKHR OF HUDHAIL.

By Him who brings weeping and laughter,
 who deals Death and Life as He wills—
She left me to envy the wild deer
 that graze twain and twain without fear !
O Love of her, heighten my heart's pain,
 and strengthen the pang every night !
O Comfort that days bring, forgetting—
 the Last of all days be thy tryst !
I marvelled how swiftly the time sped
 between us the moment we met :
But when that brief moment was ended,
 how wearily dragged he his feet !

XXXVI.

ONE UNNAMED.

I said to my fellow while our beasts were speeding
 with us from al-Munifah to ad-Dimâr—
 ‘Drink deep the scent of the flowery Upland meadows,
 for after to-night no more shall we see ‘*ardr*.’
 How sweet the breezes that blow thence to us-ward,
 when all its meads with rain besprinkled are !
 How fair the days when there thy tribesmen halted,
 and nought on thy spirit did that good time jar !
 Months waxed and waned, and we in our heart’s gladness
 recked not if full-moon-tide were near or far.

NOTES

Metre approximating to the *Wâfi*, of the original. The poem describes a journey down from the Upland—Najd—to the low land of Hajar lying on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Al-Munifah and ad-Dimâr are two halting-places in the land of Tamîm, in the eastern portion of al-Yamâmah Najd, or the Upland, is the name given to the whole of that portion of the Arabian peninsula which lies on the south, west, and east, inland from the mountain barrier which separates it from the lowland by the coast. On the north the mountains of Tayyî are included in, and form the limit on this side of Najd. Though a great part of this area is desert during the rainless season, in that of rain, lasting from October till March, it is covered with verdure, and affords excellent pasture. In these months during which the wilderness is clothed with green the tribes drive their herds to distant pastures, remote from the wells on which they depend during the season of drought; and the gathering of different clans for this purpose, and their subsequent dispersion when the summer approaches, afford the motif of the prelude of nearly every *Lasîdah* of the pre-Islamic time. Before Muhammad the year of the Arabs, though made up of lunar months, was corrected by intercalation every third year, so that at first it corresponded roughly with the natural seasons; and the three continuous months of peace, during which

they held it sacrilegious to wage any war, fell till about a hundred years before the Flight during the cold and open season. Thus many tribes were able to meet at their pastures in friendly intercourse which at other times were at deadly feud, and to every one the days of winter and spring were a pleasant memory. We read much of the loveliness of the Desert flora during the green season; but unfortunately most of the plants named in the old poetry still remain to be identified. The *'arār* which is celebrated in this piece is differently explained by different authorities. It had a yellow flower, extremely sweet-scented. Some say that it was the wild narcissus, others that it was the *buphthalmum* or ox-eye. Al-A'shā compares the complexion of a woman, in the evening light, to its clear yellow. Another desert flower was the *khuzāmd*, said to have the most delightful scent of all. This name is now applied to the common lavender; but in classical times it is said to have meant a plant having a flower like the violet; others say that it was the wild gilliflower. Another was the *ruhhāmd*, described as "having a blossom of pure white, and a white root, which the wild asses dig up with their hoofs and eat." The *ukhūwādn* or chamomile, and the *ashakān* or wild rocket, are mentioned as common.

XXXVII.**ONE UNNAMED**

Love's master was I once and free : but evermore his strength he bent
 to bind me fast, and I to loose, till in the end he mastered me.
And never saw I like us twain two lovers sundered, she from me,
 and I from her, true hearted still and faithful, spite of all men's hate :
—Two friends that have no hope of converse, meeting never face to face :
 where hast thou seen two loving hearts that looked not for the day of joy ?

NOTES.

In the commentary to this piece a verse is quoted by Ibn-al-A'rabi of which, he says, the author is not known : it is a single couplet, unique in itself :—

Three be the ways of Love a knitting of heart to heart,
 a pleasure of lips and eyes, a third love whose name is Death

XXXVIII.

IYĀS SON OF AL-ARATT, OF TAYYI.

Come, friend and fellow, come—for sometimes is Folly sweet!
 so come, let us greet our band of drinkers aglow with wine,
 And wash from our hearts sour speech of wisdom with cups abrum,
 and cut short the ills of Life with laughter and jest and joy !
 Yea, when once a moment comes of rest from the whirl, be quick
 and grasp it : for Time's tooth bites and quits not, and mischief waits ;
 And sure, if a bright hour lifts thy soul to a little peace,
 enough in thy path there lies of shadow and grief and pain !

NOTES.

The metre is *Tawil*. The lines are of course pre-islamic, but I am not able to give any further particulars of the poet, who has contributed several pieces to the Hamāsaḥ. His tribe dwelt in the parallel ranges of Aja and Salmā, the modern Jebel Shomer, the northernmost outliers of Najd. It was partly Christian in Muḥammad's time, but readily accepted al-Islām.

XXXIX.

BAKR SON OF AN-NATTÂH.

A white one · she rises slow, and sweeps with her hair the ground ;
it hides her within its coils, a billow of blackest black.
She shines in its midst like Dawn that breaks from the farthest East :
it bends like the darkest Night and veils her above, around.

NOTES.

Metre *Tawil*. The author was a man of the tribe of Hanifah, and a native of al-Yamâmah. He was a contemporary of Abû Tammâm, and was probably alive when the Hamâsah was compiled (A.H. 220).

XL.

ONE UNNAMED.

Nay, ask on the sandy hill the *ben*-tree with spreading boughs
 that stands mid her sisters, if I greeted thy dwelling-place ;
 And whether their shade looked down upon me at eventide
 as there in my grief I stood, and that for my portion chose :
 And whether, at dawn still there, mine eyelids a burthen bore
 of tears falling one by one, as pearls from a broken string.
 Yea, men long and yearn for Spring, the gladsome : but as for me—
 my longing and Spring art thou, my yearning to gain thy grace,
 And men dread the deadly Drought that slays them : but as for me—
 my Drought is to know thee gone, my life but a barren land !
 And sooth, if I suffer when thou greet'st me with words unkind,
 yet somewhat of joy it brings thou thinkest on me at all.
 So take thy delight that I stand serving with aching heart
 and eyes bathed in tears lest thou shouldst sunder thyself from me.

NOTES.

Metre Tawil. This is evidently the commencement of a *kasidah*. The *ben*-tree is a species of *moringa*, tall, with plentiful and intensely green foliage : from its nut an oil is extracted which is used medicinally. On account of the straightness and graceful shape of its branches the poets frequently compare a beautiful girl thereto.

XLI.

ANOTHER, UNNAMED.

Yea, take thy fill of joy with her what time she yields her love to thee,
and let no grieving stop thy breath whenas she turns herself to flee
Ah, sweet and soft her ways with thee: bethink thee well—the day shall come
when some one favoured e'en as thou shall find her just as sweet and free.
And if she swear that absence ne'er shall break her pact of plighted troth
—when did rose-tinted finger-tips and binding pledges e'er agree?

NOTES.

"Rose tinted finger-tips:" the Arab women tinge the ends of their fingers red with *hinnâ* (*Lawsonia inermis*).

XLII.

TAUBAH SON OF AL-HUMAIYIR.

Ah, if but Lailà once would send me a greeting down
 of grace, though between us lay the dust and the flags of stone,
 My greeting of joy should spring in answer, or there should cry
 toward her an owl, ill bird that shrieks in the gloom of graves.
 They envy me that from Lailà never was mine from her:
 how slight be the cause of joy soever, how good it is!

NOTES.

Metre *Tawil* Taubah was a man of the tribe of 'Amir son of Sa'sa'ah, and the cousin of Lailà, a woman of great beauty, belonging to the family of al-Akhyal in the same tribe. Taubah loved her from her childhood, when they were children in the desert together, but her father refused to give her to him in marriage. He led a stormy life, and met his death in fight during the reign of Mu'awiyah (A.H. 40-60). Lailà long survived him, but never forgot him and his love for her. She attained great fame as a poetess, and died during the reign of 'Abd-al-Malik son of Marwān (65-86 A.H.) at an advanced age. A tale is told of her death in which these verses figure. She was making a journey with her husband, when they passed by the grave of Taubah. Lailà, who was travelling in a litter, cried, "By God! I will not depart hence till I greet Taubah." Her husband endeavoured to dissuade her, but she would not hearken: so at last he allowed her. And she had her camel driven up the mound on which the tomb was, and said—"Peace be to thee, O Taubah!" Then she turned her face to the people, and said—"I never knew him to speak falsely until this day." "What meanest thou?" said they. "Was it not he," she answered, "who said:

'Ah, if but Lailà once would send me a greeting down
 of grace, though between us lay the dust and the flags of stone,
 My greeting of joy should spring in answer, or there should cry
 toward her an owl, ill bird that shrieks in the gloom of graves'?

Nay, but I have greeted him, and he has not answered as he said " Now there was a she-owl crouching in the gloom by the side of the grave; and when it saw the litter and the crowd of people, it was frightened, and flew in the face of the camel. And the camel was startled, and cast Lailâ headlong on the ground; and she died that hour, and was buried by the side of Taubah.

In v. 2 we seem to have a reference (in spite of al-Islâm) to the ancient superstition that the ghosts of dead men became owls (see notes to No. XXXIV. above). V. 3 is explained thus by the commentators: "They envy me Lailâ's love: but I never obtained it. Nevertheless, that my name is joined with hers in their speech is in itself a joy to me, and good, however slight a thing it be."

XLIII.

N U S A I B.

They said last night—‘To-morrow at first of dawning
 or may be at eventide Lailà must go.’
 My heart at the word lay helpless, as lies a *kata*
 in net night-long, and struggles with fast-bound wing.
 Two nestlings she left alone in a nest far distant,
 a nest which the winds smite, tossing it to and fro.
 They hear but the whistling breeze, and stretch necks to greet her :
 but she they await—the end of her days is come !
 So lies she, and neither gains in the night her longing,
 nor brings her the morning any release from pain.

NOTES.

Metre *Wâfir*, save that the second hemistich is lopped of a syllable at the end. Nusah was a slave, a negro either of the full or half blood : accounts differ as to his origin, but he is generally said to have belonged to a man of Kinânah who dwelt in the Wâdi-l-Kurâ, not far to the east of al-Madînah. He covenanted with his master to buy his freedom, and having done so, repaired to ‘Abd-al-‘Azîz son of Marwân, brother of the Khalifah and then Governor of Egypt, whom he praised in an ode. In requital therefor ‘Abd-al-‘Azîz gave him the purchase-money wherewith to redeem himself, and gifts besides. He flourished during the latter half of the first century of the Hîjrah, and excelled in amatory and laudatory poetry. For the *kata*, see notes to No. XVI. above.

XLIV.

TARAFAH SON OF AL-'ABD, OF BAKR.

A rebuke to his cousin 'Abd-'Amr son of Bishr son of Marthad.

The craft of thy busy tongue has sundered from home and kin
thy cousins of both thy houses, 'Amr, 'Auf, and Mālik's son.
For thou to thy nearest art a wind of the bitter North,
that sweeps from the Syrian hills and wrinkles our cheeks and brows :
But balmy art thou and mild to strangers, a gracious breeze
that brings from the Gulf soft showers and fills with its rain our streams.
And this of a truth I know—no fancy it is of mine—
who holds mean his kith and kin, the meanest of men is he !
And surely a foolish tongue, when rules not its idle prate
Discretion, but shows men where thou dwellest with none to guard.

NOTES

Metre *Tawīl*. The author of these lines is the famous poet of the Mu'allakah, the "Boy of the Banū Bakr that was slain," whom Labid reckoned the greatest poet of the Arabs after Imra-al-Kais. He and his maternal uncle al-Mutalimnus (himself an eminent poet) repaired to the court of 'Amr son of Hind,¹ king of al-Hirah on the Euphrates. The king received them kindly, and attached them to his brother Kābus, whom he was training to be his successor, having no sons of his own. Kābus was fond of hunting and revelry, and seems to have exacted a good deal from his following; at any rate, Tarafah found his duties irksome, and gave vent

¹ Hind was his mother's name—she was a princess of Kindah, and, strange to say, a Christian (though her husband king al-Mundhir was an obstinate heathen who practised human sacrifice, and there is no evidence that king 'Amr, her son, was ever anything else). He succeeded his father, al-Mundhir, who fell in battle against al-Harith son of Jabalah, king of Ghassān, at 'Ain Ubāgh, in 564 A.D., and reigned till 568 or 569, when he was slain by the chief of the clan Tagħlib, 'Amr son of Kulthūm.

to his feelings in verse, satirizing 'Amr and his brother. Now 'Abd-'Amr, Tarafah's cousin, who was held in high estimation by 'Amr the king, was envious of Tarafah, and spoke against him to 'Amr. These verses doubtless refer to his tale-bearings. This enmity between Tarafah and his cousin was the cause of the former's death. 'Abd-'Amr, who was a very fat man, was one day with King 'Amr in the bath, and the king, seeing him naked, said, "Surely thy cousin Tarafah must have seen thee thus when he made those verses in which he tells of thee" (quoting some lines in which 'Abd-'Amr's corpulence is spoken of). On this 'Abd-'Amr retaliated by repeating to the king the verses which Tarafah had made about him and Kābūs. The king affected to disbelieve his tale, but shortly after called al-Mutalammis and Tarafah, and asked them if they were not longing after their home and kindred, and desirous of returning to them, when they answered Yes, he gave them each a letter to Abū Karib, his governor over Hajāj, telling them that it was an order that they should receive gifts and be treated with kindness, but in reality he had written commanding that they should be put to death. Tarafah and al-Mutalammis started with their letters and as they went along the Euphrates the idea occurred to al-Mutalammis—since neither of them could read—to ask a boy of al-Hirah whom he saw there to read his letter for him. He did so, and when al-Mutalammis heard its contents, he threw it away into the river, strongly counselling Tarafah to do the same with his. But the latter refused, disbelieving what the boy had read, and thinking that 'Amr would not dare to offend the Banū Bakr by compassing his death. So al-Mutalammis turned his camel westwards and escaped to Syria, to the court of Ghassān; and Tarafah went on with his letter to Hajāj, where the governor put him to death as the king had bidden him.

"Both thy houses," i.e. thy father's house and thy mother's. To the coast lands of the Persian Gulf (where Tarafah's tribe, Bakr, had some of its settlements) the East wind is soft and mild, bringing rain from the sea. Last verse more literally—"Surely a man's tongue, when there governs it not discretion, is nought but a guide to show [his foes] where he is undefended," and may be attacked at his weakest place.

FROM THE MUFADDALIYÂT.

XLV.

ASH-SHANFARÀ OF AZD.

Alas! Ummu 'Amr set firm her face to depart, and went:
gone is she, and when she sped, she left us with no farewell
Her purpose was quickly shaped—no warning she gave her friends,
 though there she had dwelt hard by, her camels all day with ours.
Yea, thus in our eyes she dwelt, from morning to noon and eve—
 she brought to an end her tale, and floated, and left us lone.
So gone is Ummah, gone and leaves here a heart in pain :
 my life was to yearn for her, and now its delight is fled.
She won me whenas, shamefaced—no maid to let fall her veil,
 no wanton to glance behind—she walked forth with steady tread ;
Her eyes seek the ground, as though they looked for a thing lost there :
 she turns not to left or right—her answer is brief and low.
She rises before day dawns to carry her supper forth
 to wives who have need—dear alms, when such gifts are few now!
Afar from the voice of blame her tent stands for all to see,
 when many a woman's tent is pitched in the place of scorn
No gossip to bring him shame from her does her husband dread
 —when mention is made of women, pure and unstained is she.
The day done, at eve glad comes he home to his eyes' delight :
 he needs not to ask of her—' Say, where didst thou pass the day?'

And slender is she where meet, and full where it so beseems,
 and tall, straight, a fairy shape, if such upon earth there be.
 And nightlong as we sat there, methought that the tent was roofed
 above us with basil sprays, all fragrant in dewy eve—
 Sweet basil from Halyah dale, its branches abloom and fresh,
 that fills all the place with balm, no starveling of desert sands.

NOTES.

Metre *Tawîl*. These verses form the introductory portion of a *lastidâh* by ash-Shanfarâ which is included in the *Mufaddaliyat*. The part which follows is a wild tale of foray, plunder, and revenge, having nothing in common with the beautiful lines of which the above is a translation; I wish I could hope that my rendering does anything like justice to the most lovely picture of womanhood which heathen Aïabia has left us, drawn by the same hand that has given us, in the unrivalled *Lâmiyah*, its highest ideal of heroic hardness and virile strength. The time at which the scene is laid is the dispersion of the tribes from their pasture grounds at the close of spring, when the rich grass which has sprung up during the winter rains is withering under the fierce drought of summer. Umaimah in verse 4 is the same person as Ummu 'Amr of v. 1, the former name being a diminutive of the first part of the latter (*Ummu 'Amr*=Mother of 'Amr: *Umaimah*=little mother). Such names were often given by the Arabs to girls even at birth, or at any rate long before they became marriageable, see e.g. No XV. above).

"A fairy shape, if such upon earth there be": literally—"if a human being could be turned by beauty into one of the *Jinn*, such a beauty were hers". I know of no reason why the *Jinn* (the beautiful and good of whom, not the evil, are of course here intended) should not in this place be rendered "fairies". Belief in the *Jinn*, good and evil (but principally evil), existed all over Arabia long before Muhammad, through whom it has come to be embodied in the *Kur'ân*, and an article of faith for all true believers. Certain places in the Desert were supposed to be specially haunted by them, of which a list is given in al-Hamdâni's Geography, p. 154. Their presence was thought to be indicated by a peculiar sound,¹ heard at night, a low, faint humming or murmur; al-Asma'i says that this sound is really produced by the falling of grains of sand driven along by the wind, as they sweep over the wrinkled surface of the desert. Madness was believed by the Arabs to be caused by the *Jinn* taking possession of a man. The germ, if nothing more, of the stories

¹ Called 'azf, 'azif. See Lane s.v. The opinion above quoted from al-Asma'i will be found in the commentary to Labîd, *Diwân*, p. 109 (al-Khâlidî's edition).

about Solomon's power over the *Jinn*, of which the "Thousand and One Nights" are full, was current before al-Islâm, since an-Nâlighah, who died before the Kur'ân was revealed (though he was well acquainted with Christianity both at al-Hirah and in Syria), speaks of the authority granted him by God over them, and the building by them for him of Tadmor in the Wilderness "with slabs and pillars." Two years before the Hijrah (620 A.D.), on his return from his fruitless mission to at-Tâif, Muhammad while halting for the night at Nakhlah had a vision of a company of the *Jinn* listening to his recitation of the Kur'ân (see Sûrâhs xlvi., lxxii.). Halyah is a fertile valley in the northern portion of the Sa'ât, or meridional chain of al-Yaman.

Of ash-Shanfurâ of Azl, the author of the piece, very little is known beyond the character he has drawn for us himself. In this poem he appears as the associate of Ta'abbata Sharran (see above, No. VIII.), who is called by the strange nickname of "Mother of the Household." He was, like Ta'abbata, a runner of exceeding swiftness, and also a most expert archer. It is said that he was captured when a child from his tribe by the Banû Salâmân, and brought up among them. He did not learn his origin until he had grown up, when he vowed vengeance against his captors, and returned to his own tribe. His oath was that he would slay a hundred men of Salâmân; he slew ninety-eight, when an ambush of his enemies succeeded in taking him prisoner. In the struggle one of his hands was hewn off by a sword stroke, and taking it in the other he flung it in the face of a man of Salâmân and killed him, thus making ninety-nine. Then he was overpowered and slain, with one still wanting to make up his number. As his skull lay bleaching on the ground, a man of his enemies passed by that way and kicked it with his foot: a splinter of bone entered his foot, the wound mortified, and he died, thus completing the hundred. This tale, however, is not well vouched for. A dirge, composed over him by Ta'abbata Sharran, speaks of his *burial*, and expresses the usual wish that his grave may be kept green (see above, No. XXVIII.).

XLVI.

THE DEATH-SONG OF 'ABD-YAGHÛTH SON OF WAKKÂS,
CHIEF OF THE BANU-L-HÂRITH, OF NAJRÂN.

After the slaughter of their fighting men by the Governor of Khusrâu at the Castle of al-Mushakkar on the "Day of the Barred Gates," the Banû Tamîm, with their allies the five confederate tribes called ar-Ribâb, withdrew to the valley of al-Kulâb, lying between al-Yamâmah and the great southern desert called ad-Dahnâ. Their helpless state there moved the covetousness of the people of al-Yaman, and a great host set forth to attack them. But warning was brought to Tamîm, and they made ready for battle, the chief command on their side being in the hands of an Nu'mân son of Jassâs, of Taim, one of the Ribâb next to him was Kais son of 'Âsim, over Sa'd of Tamîm. The host of Madhhij was under 'Abd-Yaghûth, of the Banu-l-Hârith of Najiân. For the hole of one day the battle raged, until night parted them, an-Nu'mân was slain by an arrow, but neither side had the advantage over the other. They watched one another through the night, and on the morrow came forth again to battle. Kais son of 'Âsim now led Tamîm, and his headlong attack broke the line of al-Yaman. the standard-bearer of the enemy fled, and the rout soon became general. 'Abd-Yaghûth was taken prisoner as he was covering the retreat of his tribe. A young man of the Banû 'Uman son of 'Abd-Shams, of Tamîm, took him captive, and carried him to his tent. Now 'Abd-Yaghûth feared that if he remained in the hands of a man of little influence in the tribe, the Banû Taim, who had to avenge their chief an-Nu'mân, would succeed in gaining possession of him and putting him to death; so he promised the young man of 'Abd-Shams a hundred camels if he would take him to al-Ahtam, a chief of Sa'd of Tamîm. And he took him to al-Ahtam, who at first was minded to spare him because of the heavy ransom they would obtain for him. But Kais son of 'Âsim supported the claim of Taim to be allowed to do as they would with him, and after a hot altercation, al-Ahtam was compelled to give him up. So 'Ismah son of Ubâr, of Taim, took him to his tent, and 'Abd-Yaghûth was about to be gagged, lest he should utter satires against them before being put to death for he was a famous poet. But he promised that he would say no word against them, and they left his tongue free. Then he said—"Ye men of Taim, if ye must slay me, let me die as befits one noble." "And how wouldest thou die?" asked they. "Give

me wine to drink, and let me sing my death-song," he answered. And 'Ismah agreed, and brought him the wine—then they opened a vein in his arm, and left him thus until he bled to death. Now 'Ismah's two sons were there standing by; and as his life ebbed, they began to reproach him, saying "Thou didst gather all al-Yaman to cut us off utterly from the earth, but now behold how God has dealt with thee." And 'Abd-Yaghfûth said.—

Upbraid me not, ye twain: enough is the shame for me
 to be as I am—no gain upbraiding to you or me.
 Know ye not that in reproach is little that profits men?
 it was not my wont to blame my brother when I was free.
 O rider, if thou lightest on those men who diank with me
 in Nâjâ'ân afrotime, say—"Ye never shall meet him more!"
 Abû-Ka'ib and those twain al-Ayham my boon-fellows,
 and Kais of al-Yaman there in the uplands of Hadramaut.
 May God pay them meed of shame to Madhhij for al-Kulâb
 —the noble of blood that fled like rabble the sons of slaves!
 Had it been my will, my mare was ready to fly with me
 —behind her the black steeds lag, and slacken, and drop away:
 But it was my will to stand and fight for your father's house,
 and his doom of old is known who stands as his fellows' shield.
 I said to them while they bound my tongue with a leathern thong—
 ‘O tribesmen of Tâm, I pray you, leave me my tongue yet free!
 ‘O tribesmen of Tâm, yours is the day—be ye generous!
 the brother ye lost was not the equal in place of me.
 ‘And if ye must slay me, let me die as befits a lord;
 and if ye will let me go, my riches are yours to spoil’
 ‘Tis true then, ye men—no more shall smite on my ears the voice
 of herdsmen that drive for me their camels to fields afar?
 The matron of 'Abd-Shâms laughed to see me abased in bonds,
 as though she had seen till then no captive of al-Yaman:
 —Mularkah my wife knows well that time was when I stood forth
 a lion to lead men on or face those that rushed on me.
 Yea, many the slaughtered beast I gave to the gamers, oft
 I journeyed alone where none would venture to share my way;

And oftentimes I slew to feast my fellows the beast I rode,
 and oftentimes I rent my robe in twain for two singing-girls.
 And when 'neath the stress of spears our steeds plunged and broke and backed,
 yea, mine were the fingers deft that turned from our line their steel.
 And hosts like the locusts' swarm have swept upon me alone,
 and my hand it was that stemmed and gathered in one their spears.
 Now am I as though I ne'er had mounted a noble steed,
 or called to my horsemen—‘Charge ! gain space for our men to breathe,’
 Or bought for a wealth of gold the full skin of wine, or cried
 to true hearts at play—‘Heap high the blaze of our beacon-fire !’

NOTES

Metre *Tawîl*, with occasional variations. Of the men named in the fourth verse, Abû-Karib (otherwise called Bîshr, son of ‘Alkamah son of al-Hârith) and the two al-Ayhams—al-Aswad son of ‘Alkamah, and ‘Abd-al-Mashîh son of al-Abîyad—were chiefs of the Banu-l-Hârith of Najiân, and belonged to the Christian portion of the tribe. Kais of al-Yaman was the king of Kindah, son of Ma’dîkarîb and father of al-Ash’ath, the king in Muhammad’s time. ‘Abd-Yaghîth himself, as his name (“the servant of the idol Yaghîth”) shows, was a pagan. Yaghîth, “the Helper,” is named in the Kur’ân (Sur lxxi 23) together with Wadd, Suwâ’, Ya’ûk and Nasr, as one of the idols of the Antediluvians in Noah’s time. It was a deity specially honoured by the Yamânic race of Madhhîj (although the name ‘Abd-Yaghîth occurs also among Ma’addic tribes of the Hijâz, the Kurash and the Banû Bakr of Hawâzin), and had a sanctuary at the town of Juâsh, six days’ journey from Najiân on the road between Mekkah and Sanâ’. It is said to have had the shape of a lion, as Ya’ûk had that of a horse, and Nasr that of an eagle.

“The brother ye lost was not the equal in place of me”: this is an appeal to them to spare his life. “The brother” is an-Nu’mân son of Jassâs, their captain in the first day’s battle, when Taim and the other Ribâb bore the brunt of the fighting. “Equal in place,” i.e. equal in value for ransom or blood-wit. “Ye men”. literally, “Ye servants of God”; this is most probably a substitute for an original “servants of al-Lât,” a variation of the tribal name *Taim* [*al-Lât*], since *taim* and *‘abd* both mean *servant*. Al-Lât was a goddess, probably the Moon, worshipped chiefly by the Ma’addic tribes. There is reason to believe that in many passages of the old poems where *al-Lât* occurred the word has been altered by Muslim reciters to *Allâh*, an easy substitution which makes no difference in the construction or metre. “Of ‘Abd-Shâms” that is, descended from

'Abd-Shams, son of Sa'd, son of Zaid-Manāt, son of Tamim, "the matron" is the mother of his captor (see the account of the battle above), who received him with jeers for having allowed himself to be taken prisoner by such a stripling as her son. "Many the slaughtered beast I gave to the gamers". this refers to the favourite pastime of the ancient Arabs called *al-Maisir* (see notes to No XVII. above), the poet boasts of his liberality in supplying slaughtered camels to the gamesters (who would otherwise have had to pay for them themselves) at his own charge "Two singing-gulls". the girls who sang at the feasts of the ancient Arabs were all foreigners, either Persians or Greeks from Syria, they sang, however, at any rate sometimes, poems in Arabic, though probably to foreign airs. The Arabs had no indigenous system of music, and the art was not cultivated among them till many years after the great conquests of al-Islām had brought them in contact with more elaborate forms of civilization "And when 'neath the stress of spears, etc". the operation here described appears to have somewhat resembled the famous exploit of Arnold von Winkelried at the battle of Sempach; his cavalry were faced by an unbuckled line of spears, the points of which pricked their horses to madness and prevented their riders from getting at their enemies. 'Abd-Yaghth says that he with nimble fingers prieded aside the spears, so that they no longer met the horses but passed between them, and thus admitted his cavalry to engage the spear-men. "Bought for a wealth of gold": another favourite topic for boasting; see notes to No. XXXI above "True hearts at play" another reference to the arrow-gambling called *al-Maisir*, as already mentioned (notes to No. XVII.), this game was played in the winter season, and at night, over a great fire made in the open air, both to give warmth to the players and to attract the notice of wanderers in the neighbourhood, who were thus invited to come and partake of the hospitality of the party. The boast is thus of generosity and hospitality, for the joints of the slaughtered camels which formed the stakes were given to the poor and needy.

The battle of al-Kulāb was fought about A.D. 612, ten years before the Hijah, when Muhammad was already preaching at Mekkāh. The "Day of the Barred Gates" (*as-Safkah*), which, by reducing the strength of Tamim, led the tribes of al-Yaman to attack them, came about in this wise. After the death of Saif son of Dhū Yazan, who with the help of the Persians had expelled the Abyssinians from al-Yaman, that country became a province of the Persian Empire, and was ruled by a succession of satraps, the last of whom, in the reign of Khusrau Parvēz, was named Bādhān. This governor sent a caravan of costly products of al-Yaman (leather, silver, gold, jewels, musk, frankincense, etc.) to Khusrau, the road they took must have been by the valley of Najiān northwards, and thence along the chain of the 'Arid to al-Yamāmah, whence they would go down to the low country of Hajar, guarded by the fortress of al-Mushakkār, where Khusrau had an officer, and thence northwards along the shore of the

Gulf into the territory of al-Hirah, and so to Madâin (Ctesiphon), the Persian capital. When they reached the country of Tamîm (the north-east portion of al-Yamâmah), Sa'sâ'ah son of Nâjiyah, of Mujâshî' (a branch of Tamîm), called upon his people to plunder the caravan. They refused, and it passed on into the territory of Ya'bû' (another branch of Tamîm). These also were invited by Sa'sâ'ah to fall upon it, and on their hesitating, he said—“Men of Ya'bû’! when this caravan passes northwards into the lands of Bakî son of Wâil, they will surely plunder it, and use its spoil to help them in their war with you.” When they heard this, they arose and plundered the caravan. A man named an-Natîf obtained a saddle-bag full of jewels so precious, that when anybody thereafter won a treasure, men used to say—“he has fallen upon the treasure of an-Natîf.” Sa'sâ'ah himself got a basket full of silver basîs. Now the Persian soldiers who were escorting the caravan took refuge with Haudhah son of ‘Ali, chief of Hanifah in al-Yamâmah, and he clothed them, gave them provisions, mounted them, and travelled with them to Khusrau. Haudhah was a most handsome and eloquent man, and Khusrau when he saw him admired him greatly. In reward for his services to the caravan, he bound upon his head a coronal of pearls, and clothed him in a robe of cloth of gold, and gave him much other precious raiment, so that from that day Haudhah was known as “the Crowned.” And Khusrau said to Haudhah, “Dost thou think that the men who have done this deed are of thy tribe?” “No,” said Haudhah. “Is there peace between thee and them?” “Nay, between us is Death!” “Well then,” said Khusrau, “thou hast gained thy will upon them”, and he gave orders that a host of cavalry should be sent to lay waste the land of Tamîm. But Haudhah said—“Verily therein is an evil land, nothing but deserts and wildernesses the paths over which are not known; their water is drawn from wells only, and if they hear that thy host is coming, they will stop up their wells, and thy men will perish of thirst. My counsel to thee is that thou write to thy governor in al-Bahîm” (—Azâdi-ufîdz son of Gushnasp, whom the Arabs called *al-Mukâbir*, “the Mangler,” because he used to cut off the hands and feet of those whom he punished, and who had sworn that he would not leave of Tamîm an eye to twinkle—) “to manage the affair for thee.” Khusrau followed this advice, and sent Haudhah with his messenger to al-Mushakkâr, where they arrived a short time before the days of the gleaning (after the harvest). And the Banû Tamîm were in the habit of coming down at that season into Hajâr, to lay in a stock of coin and to take part in the gleaning. And a crier on the part of the Governor proclaimed—“Let all who are here of the tribe of Tamîm come to al-Mushakkâr, for the King hath commanded that there be given to them coin and other provision to be divided among them there.” So the men of Tamîm flocked to al-Mushakkâr, which is a strong fortress on the bank of the canal called Muhallim. And in it, besides the Persian soldiers, were Arabs of Hanifah, Haudhah’s tribe, armed to aid the Governor. And the men of Tamîm were let in one by one, being told

that they were to enter at one gate and go forth at another; and as they were admitted between the file of soldiers, their arms were taken away and the door closed behind them with an iron chain. In this way each man was passed on to where Haudhah and the Governor sat, and if he belonged to any branch of Tamim among whom were friends of Haudhah's, the latter spoke for him to the Governor, who passed him on to the storehouse, and let him go free: those, on the other hand, who belonged to the robber clans were put to death. Now the men of Tamim who were gathered about the castle noticed that though many went in, few came out, and of some branches of their tribe none: this excited their suspicion. And Khaibarī son of 'Ubādah called out to his people, who were standing near the door of issue, "Woe to you! where are your wits? What comes after spoiling but death?" And he caught a sword from a man of Sa'd standing by, named Musād, and smote with it upon the door. Now behind the door was a chain barring the way, held by a Persian soldier. And Khaibarī's stroke cut through the chain, and burst open the door, and behold, there were the men of Tamim lying dead! So those who were left outside called to warn their fellows of the treachery, and withdrew to their own land. But many had been already slain, and many more taken captive. Of the latter Haudhah procured the release of a hundred men, who were given to him by al-Muka'bū on Easter Day; and he clothed them, and gave them the means to rejoin their tribe. A number of the boys were sent by ship across the Gulf to Persia, where they were made slaves and taken to Persepolis (Istakhr). Nearly 40 years later (648 A.D.), when Persepolis was taken by the Muslims, some of these captives were found still living there, and returned home to their tribe.

This story seems to suggest that, beside the desire to take advantage of the weakness of Tamim after their disaster, the tribes of al-Yaman who attacked them at al-Kulāb may have had other motives in view. They may have been set on by Bādhān, or they may have wished independently to punish a marauding race which stopped the road taken by their caravans into Persia.

FROM THE DÎWÂN OF LABÍD.

XLVII.

His tribe had suffered heavily in their war with Tamîm, and were compelled to move south-westwards into the country of the Banu-l-Hârith of Nafrân, their ancient foes. To the latter this poem seems to be addressed, calling to mind the solemn issues of life and the vanity of all things here.

Yea, the righteous shall keep the way of the righteous,
and to God turn the steps of all that abideth ;
And to God ye return, ye too : with Him only
rest the issues of things and all that they gather.
All that is in His Book of Knowledge is reckoned,
and before Him revealed lies all that is hidden :
Both the day when His gifts of goodness on those whom
He exalts are as palms full-freighted with sweetness,
Young and burdened with fruit, their heads bowed with clusters
swelled to bursting, the tallest e'en as the lesser ;
And the day when avails the sin-spotted only
prayer for pardon and grace to lead him to mercy,
And the good deeds he wrought to witness before him,
and the pity of Him who is Compassion :
Yea, a place in His shade, the best to abide in,
and a heart still and steadfast, right-walking, honest.

Is there aught good in Life ? yea, I,—I have seen it,
 even I, if the seeing bring aught of profit.
 Long has Life been to me, and this is its burthen—
 lone against Time abide Ti'âr and Yaramram,
 And Kulâf, and Badi' the mighty, and Dalfa',
 yea, and Timâr that towers aloft over Khubbah ;
 And the Stars, marching on all night in procession,
 drooping westwards as each hies forth to his setting :
 Sure and steadfast their course · the Underworld draws them
 gently downwards, as maidens circling the Pillar ;
 And we know not, whenas their lustre is vanished,
 whether long be the ropes that bind them or little.

Lost is 'Âmir, and nought is left of her goodness
 in the meadows of al-A'iâf but her dwellings—
 Ruined shadows of tents and penfolds and shelters,
 bough from bough rent, and spoiled by wind and by weather.
 Gone is 'Âmir, her ancients gone, all the wisest :
 none remain but a folk whose war-mares are fillies ;
 Yet they stay them in every breach in our rampart—
 yea, and they that bestride them, true-hearted helpers,
 They contemn not their kin when change comes upon them,
 nor do we scorn the ties of blood and of succour.

Now on 'Âmir be peace and praises and blessing,
 wheresoe'er be on earth her way or her halting !

Notes.

The metre is *Khafif*, as in the original.

We know very little of the history of this poem except what the piece itself tells. The superscription in the poet's *Dîwân* is—"He said, when the Banû Ja'far left their own country and settled in the land of the Banû-l-Hârith, ibn Ka'b". The Banû Ja'far were Labîd's own branch of the Banû 'Âmir ibn Sa'sâ'ah. We know from other sources that the Banû 'Âmir were engaged in a long contest with Tamîm, in the course of

which they fought many battles. The two tribes were neighbours in the north of al-Yamâmah, where they shared between them the rich pasture-lands called the "Ghamr, or Hollow, of Kindah"—a tract from which the kings of Kindah had been expelled as a consequence of the victory of Shî'b Jabalah (see notes to No XLIX.) Under what circumstances the emigration of 'Âmir, referred to in the superscription, took place we do not know: it is mentioned in other poems by Labid, but our data for the history of the time are too fragmentary to enable us to explain it. It does not seem to have lasted very long; probably the breaking of the power of Tamîm which took place in or about 611 A.D. at al-Mushakkâr (see notes to No XLVI above), though repaired in the following year by the victory of al-Kulâb, necessitated their moving off the country which they had occupied in despite of 'Âmir, and enabled that tribe to return. We find them in their old sites during the Prophet's wars, and not only there, but extremely powerful and warlike, so that their chief, 'Âmir son of at-Tufail, could boast that if the Prophet commanded the whole of the settled land, he, 'Âmir, commanded all the forces of the desert.

The Banu-l-Hârith ibn Ka'b are the same tribe which we have met before (see notes to Nos V, XII, and XLVI), they are the famous Christian race of Najiân, who then possessed the wide pasture-lands stretching northwards, behind the Hijâz and the Sa'ât, to the transverse range of the 'Aîd which joins al-Yamâmah to at-Tâif. It was in this neighbourhood that Tamîm settled, at al-Kulâb, after their disaster at al-Mushakkâr; and the Banu-l-Hârith under 'Abd-Yaghûth were the leaders of the forces of al-Yaman at the battle of al-Kulâb (see notes to No XLVI.). They were old enemies of 'Âmir, with which tribe they had many battles. Their greatness and nobleness were generally recognized by their neighbours, especially those of the Hijâz, to whom they represented the flower of al-Yaman.

The strong religious feeling which characterizes this poem is one of its most remarkable features. At one period it was common to explain the appearance of passages such as these in the old poetry, where ideas are found to be familiar in the "Days of the Ignorance" which it was supposed were first propagated among the Arabs by al-Islâm, by forgery and interpolation. Such a hypothesis can no longer be reasonably sustained. It is one of the special "notes" of Labid, examples of which are found in many other passages of his poetry, that his strongly religious—but not *Islamic*—nature is constantly asserting itself amidst the carelessness of the ordinary Bedawi existence. When we reflect that Christianity was firmly established in Najiân among the tribe which he was addressing, we shall not find it strange that he touches upon such considerations. In another poem he describes a journey from al-Yamâmah down to the coast-lands of Hajar on the Persian Gulf, and tells how, entering upon the villages there, the party were greeted by the crowing of cocks and the beating of the clapper of wood which in the Eastern Christian churches is the substitute

for the church bell. It is remarkable that in the works of four of the most prominent Arabian poets of the Pre-islamic time — an-Nâbighah, Zuhair, al-A'shâ, and Labîd, we find expressions which show that they at least, if not the wild wanderers of the Desert, knew very well what a spiritual religion meant. An-Nâbighah was a frequenter of the Christian courts of al-Hirah and Ghassân, al-A'shâ was even more closely allied with the Christian chiefs of Najrân, and the Christian Haudhah, chief of Hanifah on the opposite side of the Peninsula, whom he praised in a fine ode for his generosity in redeeming a hundred captives of Tumim from death at al-Mushakkâi, an act of mercy which is specially represented in the poem as "an Easter offering before God"—

"And there he loosed from their bonds a hundred out of their pain
from all on that happy dawn he flung their fetters away
These were his offering meet that Easter morning, with these
he came before God, in hope to win the meed of his love"¹

Labîd knew also the court of al-Hirah, but seems to have frequented it but seldom, his nature was however the most earnest and devoutly disposed of the four. He was the only one who lived to embrace Islâm, after accepting which he made no more poems. Of Zuhair's views as to a future reckoning evidence will be found in his Mu'allakah below (see No. L. vv. 27, 28). A wider study of these and other poets of the time will probably lead to considerable modification of the opinions once current as to the degree to which Arabia had been prepared for the teaching of the Prophet, and as to the relation between the ideas preached by Muhammad and the generally prevalent thought of his day.

Ti'âr, Yâlamram, Kulâf, Badi', and Timâr are the names of mountains; the contrast between the fugitive life of man and the everlasting hills and stars is a favourite idea with Labîd: a beautiful elegy on the death of his brother Arbad begins thus—

"We wither away, but they wane not, the Stars that rise on high,
and the hills and the towers of old bide steadfast, though we be gone"

"As maidens circling the Pillar". This phrase (for which there is an alternative reading "like as a nurse-camel turns her younglings about her") refers to a usage of the heathen time, when upright stones were worshipped by circumambulation. Imra-al-Kais in his Mu'allakah in like manner compares a herd of wild kine, with their long sweeping tails, to a group of girls clad in long-skirted gowns going round this same "Pillar" (*Dawdr*, or *Duwdar*). Worship by going round a sacred object was the ancient Arab rite which the Prophet retained as the centre-point of the ceremonies of the Pilgrimage, when the Ka'bah or Holy House at Mekkah is circumambulated.

¹ Tabari, i. p. 987. Metre *Basit*.

seven times. "Whether long be the ropes that bind them or little": i.e., how the stars are hung there no man knows - we know only their rising and setting, always the same. The Arabs had a strange idea that the stars were hung by ropes in the celestial sphere. Imia-al-Kais, describing a night which seemed as though it would never end, says—

O what a night art thou—as though all thy sluggish stars
were fast bound with twisted ropes to Yadhbûl,¹ and moved no more
As though in their place of poise the Pleiads were hung aloft,
with cables of flaxen strands to crags of the hardest stone !

"Al-A'râf," an elevated table-land in the country of 'Âmir. Note that the tribes of the Arabs are always spoken of collectively in the feminine gender "Every breach in our rampart" this refers to natural or moral, not artificial, lines of defence. as the emigrants moved along through the country they traversed, this or that would become a point from which attack was dreaded, metaphorically, "a breach," and their defenders here spoken of would ride forth to keep guard till the tribe had passed on. Probably, as is to be inferred from the mention of the Banû Ja'far in the superscription, only some of the divisions of 'Âmir took part in this emigration; and the defenders would thus be the cousins and fellow-clansmen, but not of the immediate family, of the poet.

Labid is said to have been born nine years before the battle of Shi'b Jabalah, which is fixed by the same tradition in 552 A.D.; he became a Muslim in 631. He is stated to have died at a great age early in the Khalifate of Mu'âwiyyah, which began in A.D. 661. As to the date of his birth, however, there is reason to think that it is put a good deal too far back. He was still a boy during the reign of an-Nu'mân of al-Hirah, whose accession took place in 580.

¹ Yadhbûl is the name of a mountain. See No. XLIX, line 8

FROM THE DÎWÂN OF AN-NÂBIGHAH.

XLVIII.

He had dwelt long at the court of an-Nu'mân son of al-Mundhir, the last king of al-Hirah, who greatly admired his poems; but the king having been led by the malice of the poet's enemies to withdraw his favour from him, an-Nâbighah fearing for his life fled from al-Hirah to his home; thence he betook himself to the court of Ghassân in Syria, where he praised the king, 'Amr son of al-Hârith al-A'raj, in this poem.

Leave me alone, O Umaimah—alone with my sleepless pain
—alone with the livelong night and its wearily lingering stars,
It draws on its length of gloom; methinks it will never end,
 nor ever the Star-herd lead his flock to their fold for rest:
—Alone with a breast whose griefs that roamed far afield by day
 the darkness has all brought home: in legions they throng around.

A favour I have with 'Amr, a favour his father bore
 toward me of old, a grace that carried no scorpion's sting.
I swear, and my word is true—an oath that hath no reserve,
 and nought in my heart is hid save fair thought of him my friend—
If those twain his fathers were who lie in their graves, the one
 at Jillîk, the other there at Sandâ by Hârib's side,
And Hârith of Jafnah's line, the Lord of his folk of old—
 yea, surely his might shall reach the home of his enemy!

In him hope is sure of help when men say—‘The host is sped,
 ‘the horsemen of Ghassán’s line unblemished, no hureling herd,
 ‘His cousins, all near of kin, their chief ‘Amr, ‘Amir’s son
 ‘—a people are they whose might in battle shall never fail !’

When goes forth their host to war, above them in circles wheel
 battalions of eagles, pointing the path to battalions more .
 Their friendship is old and tried—fast comrades in foray, bred
 to look unafraid on blood, as hounds to the chace well trained.
 Behold them, how they sit there, behind where the armies meet,
 awatching with eyes askance, like elders in gray furs wrapt,
 Intent. for they know full well that those whom they follow, when
 the clash of the hosts shall come, will bear off the victory.

Ay, well is their custom known, a usage that Time has proved,
 when lances are laid in rest on withers of steeds arow—

Of steeds in the spear-play skilled, with lips for the fight drawn back,
 their bodies with wounds all scarred, some bleeding and some half-healed.
 And down leap the riders where the battle is strait and stern,
 and spring in the face of Death like stallions amid the herd ;
 Between them they give and take deep draughts of the wine of Doom
 as their hands ply the white swords, thin and keen in the smiting-edge.
 In shards fall the morions, burst by the fury of blow on blow,
 and down to the eyebrows cleft fly shattered beneath the skulls.
 In them no defect is found, save only that in their swords
 are notches a many, gained from smiting of host on host
 An heirloom of old, those blades, from the fight of Halimah’s Day,
 and many the mellay fierce that since has their temper proved ;
 Therewith do they cleave in twain the hauberk of double woof,
 and kindle the rock beneath to fire ere the stroke is done.
 A nature is theirs, God gives the like to no other men—
 a wisdom that never sleeps, a bounty that never fails.
 Their home is in God’s own land, His chosen of old . their faith
 is steadfast : their hope is set on nought but the World to come.
 Their sandals are soft and fine, and girded with chastity
 they welcome with garlands sweet the dawn of the Feast of Palms.

There greets them when they come home full many a handmaid fair,
 and ready on trestles hang the mantles of scarlet silk ;
 Yea, softly they wrap their limbs, well knowing of wealth and ease,
 in rich raiment, white-sleeved, green at the shoulder in royal guise.
 They look not on Weal as men who know not that Woe comes too
 they look not on evil days as though they should never mend.

*Lo, this was my gift of praise to Ghassân, what tame I sought
 my people, and all my paths were darkened, and strait my ways.*

Norrs

The metre is *Tawîl*, with occasional variations

An-Nâbighah, the poet's surname, signifies one who, not being the offspring of a poet or trained in poesy from early youth, first begins to compose verse in mature age, and excels therein. His name was Ziyâd, son of Mu'âwiyah (or son of 'Amr son of Mu'âwiyah), of the family of Ghâdîh son of Murrah, of the tribe of Dhubyâin. Very little that is exact is known as to his life. His fame appears to have been well established during the half century before the appearance of Muhammad, but he had died before al-Islâm was offered to his nation. He must have sought the Court of an-Nu'mân at al-Hîshâh somewhat early in that monarch's reign (which began about 580 A.D. and ended about 602), since after leaving it on the occasion to which this poem refers, he made a long stay at the Court of Ghassân, and after the death of King 'Amî returned to al-Hîshâh, where he was again received into favour. He is said to have survived the downfall of an-Nu'mân, since a poem is attributed to him in which the event is mentioned. An-Nu'mân was a nominal Christian, having been brought up in a Christian family (that of Zaid, the father of the famous poet 'Adî, who procured for him his crown and whom he afterwards so ill acquitted), but his religion cannot have been very sincere, since he lived in a state of polygamy like his heathen forefathers. The incident which led to his change of feeling towards an-Nâbighah is differently related. One story is that the poet introduced into one of his poems a description of an-Nu'mân's queen Mutajarrîdah, of whose beauty he had caught a hasty glimpse at a feast at which he was present, which displeased the king, another is that an-Nâbighah's enemies forged in his name a very bitter satire against the king, whose mother was the daughter of a goldsmith at Fadak near Yathrib, and repeated it to an-Nu'mân. Of the two stories the latter appears to me the more probable, to judge from the tenor of an-Nâbighah's poems in which he declares his innocence of that with which he was charged. That he had

good reason to fear the king's enmity is plain from the treatment which his fellow-poet 'Adi son of Zaid suffered at the monarch's hands for a like offence, although 'Adi had the power of Persia at his back, while an-Nābighah was but a simple Arab of the Desert.

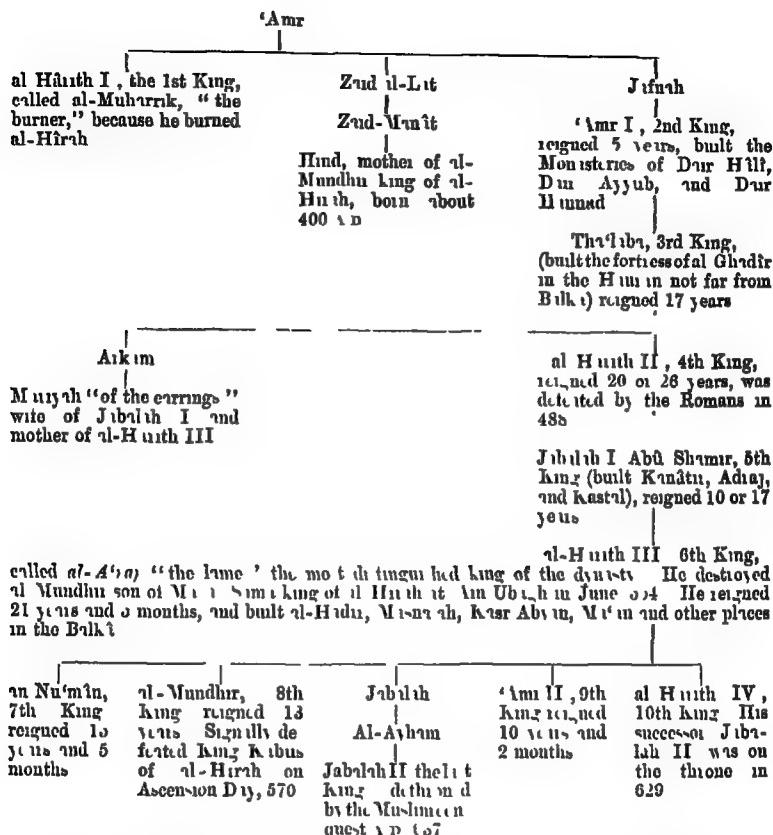
The kings of Ghassān, though sprung from the same Yamanic stock as the royal family of al-Hīrah, were the hereditary enemies of the latter. As the Lakhmīte line of al-Hīrah controlled, in dependence upon the Persian king, the Aīabs on the Euphrates, the settled population of the coast lands of the Gulf (Hajar and al-Bahrain), and the nearest stocks of the Desert and Nājd, so did the *Phylarchi* of Ghassān perform the same office for the Greek Emperors of Constantinople in respect of the Arabs of Syria and the Holy Land. The relations between Khusīān and Kaisar thus determined the attitude of their respective vassals, and during all the wars of the Sasanians with the Romans the Aīab hosts of Ghassān and al-Hīrah were in constant conflict. Unlike the Lakhmītes of the Euphrates, the kings of Ghassān appear to have had no permanent capital. Their country was the Gaulonitis south of Damascus, the Syrian desert as far north as Tadmor, and the course of the Jordan down to and about the Dead Sea, with an undefined sphere of influence further east. Their kings are mentioned as having built various castles, towns, and monasteries in this region, but no one place, like al-Hīrah of the Lakhmītes, is named as the abode of the Phylarch, whose dominions were known to the Romans as the Provinces of Arabia and Palæstina tertia. This connection with the Holy Land (though the Ghassanides did not actually hold Jerusalem) is referred to by an-Nābighah in the verse—"Their home is in God's own land, His chosen of old." Unfortunately, the deepest confusion reigns in respect of the names, number, and order of succession of the kings of Ghassān. As Christians, and as representing the distant Roman authority, they were far less known to the Arabs than the rulers of al-Hīrah, who were half heathen to the very last, and the administrators of the Great King whose name was a power throughout nearly the whole peninsula. The Roman records of the dynasty must have perished at the conquest of Syria by the Muslims, and the scattered notices we have of them are altogether anecdotal in their character. One authority¹ gives the names of thirty-three kings, in seventeen generations. Another² mentions twenty-two kings. A third³ says that there reigned only eleven kings, of whom he names but seven. I give the table below after Dr. Spieger⁴ as the most probable approximation to the genealogy of this royal race.

¹ Hamzah of Ispahān.

² Ad-Dumishkī, *Akhbār ad-duwal wa Āthār al-'uwal*.

³ Al-Mas'ūdī.

⁴ See Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1850, p. 469.



The dynasty of Ghassan was far more civilized than that of al-Harith, and some reflection of its civilization may be discerned in this poem. It will be seen that the second king 'Amr I, was a Christian, who built monasteries, and Christianity continued in the dynasty down to its close. The newly contemporaneous heathen names of Zud al-Ilt and Zud Manāt point to the recent conversion of the family in King 'Amr's time.

Of the poem the first three verses form the obligatory opening, in which it is usual to call to mind some woman, that various thoughts of love may soften the hearts of the hearers. Ninety nine out of every hundred poems open so. Here the ordinary form is slightly departed from, since the poet

tells of his griefs due, not to love, but to his unhappy relations with an-Nu'mân. Who the "Star-herd" in v. 2 is, is a question which has much exercised commentators—the reader will judge from the above translation (which is perfectly literal) if it is necessary to imagine that the poet had any special shepherd of the stars in view at all; it seems to me that he had not. In v. 3 the poet's woes are compared to camels during the day they roam afar in distant pastures, but at night they come home to the camp. King 'Amr is the 9th king of the dynasty and the second of the name; his father, the great al-Hârith III *al-A'raj*. The table above will show that the two buried at Jilhâ and Saïdâ (both in their time royal residences in the Ghútâh or hollow plain of Damascus) are this al-Hârith the Lame, and his father Jabalah I, while "Hârith of Jafnah's line" is the father of Jabalah, al-Hârith II. The whole dynasty is frequently called "the house of Jafnah." It is not known who 'Amr son of 'Amir was, but the race was a prolific one and doubtless had many collaterals. "The fight of Halimah's Day," a most famous battle in the history of the Ghassânide dynasty, it is characteristic of the unhistorical nature of our information regarding events which happened in the ages before Muhammad that, although this battle is a proverb for celebrity (—you say, "the Day of Halimah is no secret," as we say in English, "Queen Anne is dead," for something that is perfectly notorious—), no two accounts are agreed as to what the Day of Halimah was. There are some who say that it was the great battle which the race of Ghassân, then newly arrived from the south, won over an Arab people established in Syria called the Dajâ'imah, the result of which was the destruction of the latter and the establishment of the new dynasty. Others say that it is identical with the battle of 'Ain Ubâgh, fought in June, 554, by al-Hârith al-A'raj against al-Mundhir son of Mâ-as-Samâ King of al-Hirah, in which the latter was defeated and slain. A third series of traditions allege that this and 'Ain Ubâgh were two different battles, and that the former was fought between al-Hârith the Lame and al-Mundhir, son of the al-Mundhir who was slain at 'Ain Ulâgh. The last is however not possible, for al-Hârith the Lame did not survive till the reign of this al-Mundhir. The best opinion seems to be that the day is identical with that of 'Ain Ubâgh, which was some forty years before these verses were composed. Halimah is said to be the name of a princess of Ghassân, daughter of al-Hârith the Lame, who was bidden by her father to perfume a chosen body of a hundred champions who were going forth to attack al-Mundhir, as she was dealing out the perfume, one of the warriors, Labid son of 'Amr, caught her in his arms and kissed her. She complained to the king, who laughed and said that he hoped great things from one so bold, and that if he returned safe from the battle he would give her to him to wife. Labid alone of the hundred, according to the legend, came back safe, having slain al-Mundhir, and al-Hârith desisted to give him his daughter. But Labid said to him—"It shall not be said of me that I am the only one that has escaped out of a hundred" so he went back into the

battle, and fighting, was slain. It is said that such a mighty dust was caused by the hosts that rushed against one another on the Day of Hâlîmah that the light of the sun was quite put out, and the stars were seen at noon-day! Whence another proverbial saying—"To show one the stars at noon"—used of any terrible commotion "And kindle the rock beneath to fire ere the stroke is done" i.e. the force of their stroke is such that not only does the sword go clean through the body of the foeman, coat of mail and all, but it has strength enough left to strike fire from the rock on which he stands "Their sandals are soft and fine" luxurious shoes are often mentioned by Arab poets by way of setting forth the high position of the wearer I am unable to explain what special ceremony is referred to in the next line It has been said already that these Ghassanides were Christians, to whom Palm Sunday would be an important feast probably the word *zâhdâ*, which usually means "pieces of sweet basil," here has the general meaning of flowers, wreaths, such as might fitly be, and very likely still are, used on Palm Sunday "Green at the shoulders in royal guise" it is said that a green band at the shoulders, the rest of the sleeve and the body of the robe being white, was a special mark of royal race.

It will be useful to give here the succession of the Kings of al-Hirah, so far as they can be fixed The details are from Tabari, and the dates of the later kings from Prof Noldeke's *Geschichte der Sasaniden*

Legendary Kings

	LENGTH OF REIGN
1 'Ami I son of 'Adi son of Na'î son of Rabî'ah son of Lakhm	113, 100, or 50 years
2 Imra-al-Kâis I	451 "
3 'Ami II son of No 2	30 "
4 Aus son of Kallâm, "an Amalekite" (i.e. race unknown)	5 "
5 Imra-al-Kâis II	25 "
6 an-Nu'mân I, son of No 5, builder of Khawâinak, tutor of King Bahrâm Göi said to have renounced the world and become an anchorite at the end of his reign	29 yrs 4 m

Semi-historical Kings

7 al-Mundhir I his mother was Hind of Ghassân (see above)	44 years
8 al-Aswad, son of No 7 his mother Hirr, of Shaibân, of Bakr	20 "
9 al-Mundhir II, brother of No 8, and son of Hirr	7 "

Historical Kings

10 an-Nu'mân II, son of No 8, his mother sister of al-Hârith al-Kindî (We know from Joshua Stylites that he died from a wound in 503 A.D.)	4 "
11. Abû Ya'fur, of the Lakhmite race, but not of the royal stock.	3 "
12 al-Mundhir III son of Imra-al-Kâis, also called by the Arabs son of Mâ-as-Samâ, and by the Greeks Ἀλαμούνδαρος δ Σακκᾶς	49 "

This prince began to reign in 505 or 506, and was killed by al-Hârith the Lame of Ghassân at 'Ain Ubâigh in June, 554. He was constantly attacking the Roman borders, and is frequently mentioned by Byzantine writers

13.	'Amr III son of No 12 his mother Hind daughter of al-Hāith of Kindah	15–16 years
	Called by the Greeks "Αμύρος ὁ Ἀλαμουνθάρος (554–669).	
14	Kābūs, brother of No 13, and also son of Hind (569–573)	· · · · 4 "
	Called by the Greeks Καμβάσης or Καβάσης	
15	Suhrāb (a Persian Satrap, not a king) . . . : .	probably less than a year
16.	al-Mundhir IV. brother of No. 13 and son of Hind	· · · · 4 years
	Probably an interregnum	
17.	an-Nu'mān III. Abū Kābūs, son of No 16.	22 "
	(whose reign may be considered to fall between 58½ and 60½)	

FROM THE MU'ALLAKÂT.

XLIX.

FROM THE MU'ALLAKAH OF IMRA-AL-KAIS.

O Friend—see the lightning there! it flickered, and now is gone,
as though flashed a pair of hands in the pillar of crowned cloud
Nay, was it its blaze, or the lamps of a hermit that dwells alone,
and pours o'er the twisted wicks the oil from his slender cruse?
We sat there, my fellows and I, twixt Dârij and al-'Udhab,
and gazed as the distance gloomed, and waited its oncoming
The right of its mighty rain advanced over Katan's ridge:
the left of its trailing skirt swept Yadhbul and as-Sitâr;
Then over Kutaifah's steep the flood of its onset drove,
and headlong before its storm the tall trees were borne to ground;
And the drift of its waters passed o'er the crags of al-Kanân,
and drove forth the white-legged deer from the refuge they sought therein.
And Taimâ—it left not there the stem of a palm aloft,
nor ever a tower, save one firm built on the living rock
And when first its misty shroud bore down upon Mount Thabit,
he stood like an ancient man in a gray-streaked mantle wrapt
The clouds cast their burden down on the broad plain of al-Ghabit,
as a trader from al-Yaman unfolds from the bales his store;
And the topmost crest on the morrow of al-Mujainî's cairn
was heaped with the flood-boane wrack like wool on a distaff wound.

At earliest dawn on the morrow the birds were chirping blithe,
 as though they had drunken draughts of riot in fiery wine ;
 And at even the drowned beasts lay where the torrent had borne them, dead,
 high up on the valley sides, like earth-stained roots of squills.

NOTES.

Metre *Tawîl*, with variations These verses form the conclusion of the famous Mu'allakah, the most celebrated poem in Arabic. The scene of the storm which they paint for us is the country of the Banū Asâd, immediately south of the twin ranges of Aja and Salma, the mountains of Tayyi (now called Jebel Shomeï) All the names, except Taimâ, al-Ghabit, and al-Mujaimir, are those of mountains in this region. Taimâ is an oasis of great fertility due west of the western extremity of the northernmost of the parallel ranges, Jabal Aja the plain of al-Ghabit is a depression to the south of Taimâ, and al-Mujaimir is a low stony hill, like a heap of stones, in the midst of it.

Imra al-Kais frequently compares bright things (as the lightning here, or the glory of a beautiful face) to the glow of an anchorite's lamp, lit at evening as a way-mark to travellers. This is only one of many indications in the old poetry which go to show that if Christianity had no firm hold save at one or two points in Arabia (as at Nujâr in al-Yaman, and the Christian settlements in Hajar and al-Bahrain, which had no less than five bishops), there was a pretty generally diffused knowledge, at any rate of its external forms. Imra-al-Kais, prince of the Banū Kindah, son of Hujr son of al-Hâirth the antagonist of al-Mundhir King of al-Hîrah, was nephew also of Hind, the Christian queen of al-Hîrah, who founded a cloister there.¹ His life falls during the reign of al-Mundhir (called the Son of Mâ-as-Samâ—“Rain of the Heaven,” his mother’s name), who mounted the throne of al-Hîrah in 505 or 506 A.D., and held it till 554. Al-Hâirth, the King of Kindah, was al Mundhir’s hereditary enemy, and for a time occupied his throne. This tribe, a sister stock of the Himyarites and originally settled in Hadramaut, had, under the overlordship of the Tubba’s of Himyar, extended their power over a great part of Central Najd, including al-Yamâmah, and the lowlands of Hajar and al-Bahrain, where they held the strong fortress of al-Mushakkar. Al-Hâirth is said to have embraced the doctrines of Mazdak the Persian heresiarch at the bidding of Kawâdh, the then Emperor, who helped him to oust al-Mundhir from al-Hîrah. His success in this quarter did not however last long, for in 529 A.D. al-Mundhir slew

¹ See Noldeke, Geschichte der Sasaniden, p. 172, note 1. This convent is probably the Dair Hind, the founding of which is ascribed by the Kitâb al-Aghâñî to Hind daughter of an-Nu'mân III and wife of 'Adi son of Zaid, but the inscription quoted by Yâkût leaves no doubt that the foundress lived three generations before

him and threw back the power of Kindah into the Peninsula. On al-Hârith's death, his kingdom was split up, and his sons divided among themselves the different tribes which had accepted allegiance to Kindah. Hujr, the eldest, obtained the lordship of the tribes of Asad and Ghatafân, then settled to the south of the mountains of Tayyî, in an extensive tract reaching south to al-Yamâmah. How long he ruled here we do not know, but it is during this period that the greater part of the poetry of Imra-al-Kais which has come down to us must have been composed. Hujr met his death from a rising of the Banû Asad against his tax-gatherers, which developed into a general revolt. The duty of avenging his murder fell upon Imra-al-Kais, who is represented as the only capable prince of his family, and the few historical data which we have regarding him relate to his adventures while bent upon this vengeance. He first obtained the assistance of the tribes of Bakî and Taglib, with whom he followed up Asad and inflicted a slaughter upon them. After this his auxiliaries declined to help him further, and he repaired to Himyar, where he succeeded in inducing a chief named Maithad to lend him a detachment of cavalry. With this he advanced northwards against Asad a second time, but was now confronted not only by the rebellious tribe, but by the horsemen of al-Mundhir his hereditary enemy, who did not cease to bend his efforts to crushing the family of al-Hârith. The Himyarite cavalry gradually melted away, and Imra-al-Kais was left alone, a vagabond seeking assistance where he thought it likely that it would be granted. After some time spent thus, chiefly in the mountains of Tayyî, he decided to visit the Court of the Greek Emperor, upon whose territories the raids of al-Mundhir had inflicted great loss, hoping that he would help forward his cause, and started for Constantinople in the company of the poet 'Amu son of Kami'ah of Bakr (see above, No XXXI). The traditions say that the Kursar gave him an army, and that he set out with it homewards, but on the way the Emperor, having heard from an enemy that Imra-al-Kais had had an intrigue with his daughter, sent him, with a friendly letter, a poisoned mantle (like that of Nessus). This the Arab prince put on, and was immediately covered with ulcers, from the plague of which he died at Ankurah (the modern Angora) in Asia Minor. From this end, and from his wandering life, he received the titles of "the Man of the Ulcers," and "the Wandering King." His death may have taken place about 540 or 541 A.D., or perhaps a few years later. In the interval between the death of al-Hârith in 529 and the birth of the Prophet in 570 A.D. the power of Kindah over Central and Northern Arabia fell completely to pieces. It is impossible to give dates, but Shurahbil brother of Hujr was slain at al-Kulâb on the lower Euphrates by his own brother Salamah; the latter was overthrown, and a son of Shurahbil killed, by al-Mundhir at the first Day of Uwâiah. Two kings of the race of Kindah, grandsons of al-Jaun (a brother of al-Hârith), fought against 'Amu at the battle of Shî'b Jabalah (about 552 A.D.), where one of them was slain and the other taken prisoner. Expelled thus from their possessions in

Eastern and Central Arabia, the tribe retired again to Hadramaut, where we find them, still governed by rulers who bore the title of King, in the days of the Prophet. That Imra-al-Kas was himself a heathen there can be no doubt: this is plain not only from his name—"the man of al-Kas," a deity among the pagan Arabs—but also from his visit, before he set out northwards with his Himyarite troops against Asad, to the temple of the oracle Dhu-l-Khalasah in the valley of Tabâlah north of Najâd, belonging to the tribe of Khath'am. This oracle was consulted, as usual at all such shrines in heathen Arabia, by shuffling before the image of the god a set of arrows, these were here three in number, called respectively "the Commanding," "the Forbidding," and "the Waiting." He drew the second, and thereupon broke the arrows and flung them in the face of the idol, saying—"If *thy* father had been slain, thou wouldest not have restrained me!"

L.

THE MU'ALLAKAH OF ZUHAIR.

How war arose between 'Abs and Dhubyâن from the Race of Dâhis who fell therin, and who slew them. what famous Days were gained by either kin. what songs were made to tell of valiant deeds done, and what dirges over brave men that died how the heads of Dhubyâن were slain at the Cistern of al-Habâ'ah, and how 'Abs wandered forth thereafter through many strange lands all this may be told at another season What is now to be related is the manner in which peace was made, and the brother tribes reconciled together.

There was a certain lord of Dhubyâن, by name al-Hârith son of 'Auf son of Abû Hârithah, of the house of Ghâdîh son of Muâîah son of Sa'd, great in wealth and fame among the kindred of Faâîah He said one day to his uncle's son, Khârijah son of Sinâî—"Thinkest thou that any whose daughter I asked in marriage would deny her to me?" "Yes," he answered "Who?" said al-Hârith "Aus son of Hârithah son of La'm of Tayyi," said Khârijah Then said al-Hârith to his servant—"Mount with me" So they mounted one camel together, and rode until they came to Aus son of Hârithah in his own land, and they found him in his house And when he saw al-Hârith son of 'Auf, he said—"Hail to thee, O Hârith!" "And to thee," said al-Hârith "What has brought thee hither, O Hârith?" said Aus "I have come a-wooing," answered he. "This is not the place for thee," said Aus, and turned his back upon him and spoke no word more Then Aus went in to his wife in anger Now she was a woman of 'Abs, and she said—"Who was the man who stopped at thy door, with whom thou hadst such short speech?" He answered—"That was al-Hârith son of 'Auf son of Abû Hârithah the Muâî, the lord of the Arabs" "What befall thee that thou didst not bid him alight?" asked she "He dealt foolishly with me," said he "How so?" she asked. "He came a-wooing," he answered "Dost thou wish to wed thy daughter?" she asked "Yes," said he. "And if thou wilt not give one to the lord of the Arabs to wife, to whom then wilt thou wed her?" "Nay," he answered, "the thing is done" "Nay but," she said, "make amends for what thou hast done" "How?" he asked "Follow after him and bring him back with thee" "How should I do so, when that has befallen which has befallen between me and him?" She answered—"Say to him—'Thou foundest me in anger because thou didst propound to me suddenly a matter whereof thou hadst not spoken to me before, and I was not able at the time to answer thee but as thou heardest: but now return, I pray thee, and thou shalt find

with me all that thou desirest': verily he will do as thou askest" So Aus mounted and rode after those twain "Then," (says Khârijah son of Sinân, who was with al-Hârith and tells the tale,) "I was journeying on our way, when I chanced to rouse mine eyes, and saw Aus riding after us. And I went forward to al-Hârith, but he spoke nought to me by reason of the grief that was in him, and I said to him—'Here is Aus son of Hârith following us' He answered—"And what have we to do with him? pass on" And when Aus saw that we tarried not for him, he cried after us—'O Hârith! wait for me a moment' So we waited for him, and he spoke to us that speech which his wife had made for him, and al-Hârith returned with him in gladness And I heard that Aus when he went into his house said to his wife—"Call to me such an one"—naming the eldest of his three daughters, and she came forth to him And he said to her—"O my daughter, this is al-Hârith son of 'Auf, a lord of the Arabs he has come asking a boon, that I should wed to him one of my girls, and I purposed to wed thee to him what sayest thou thereto?" She answered—"Do it not" "Why?" he asked She said—"I am a woman uncomely in face, faulty in temper I am not his uncle's daughter, that he should regard my kinship with him, nor is he thy neighbour in the land, that he should be ashamed before thee, and I fear lest one day he see in me something which may displease him, and divorce me, and thine befall me therein what is wont to befall" He said "Rise—God bless thee! Call to me such an one"—naming his second daughter, and she called her And he spoke to her as he had spoken to her sister, and she answered him after the same fashion, saying—"I am ignorant and awkward there is no skill in my hand. I fear lest he see in me something to displease him, and divorce me, and thine befall me therein what thou knowest He is not mine uncle's son, that he should regard my right, nor thy neighbour in thy land, that he should be ashamed before thee" He said "Rise—God bless thee! Call to me Buhaish"—naming his youngest daughter, and she was brought to him And he spoke to her as he had spoken to her two sisters And she said—"As thou wilt" He said—"Verily I offered this to thy two sisters, and they refused" "Nay but I," said she (and he had not told her what the two had said), "By God! am the fair in face, the skilful with her hands, the noble in nature, the honourable in her father, and if he divorce me, God will bring no good upon him thereafter" And he said—"God bless thee!" Then he came forth to us and said—"I wed to thee, O Hârith, Buhaish daughter of Aus" "I accept her," said al-Hârith Then Aus bade her mother make her ready and deck her for the wedding; and he gave command that a tent should be pitched for al-Hârith, and lodged him therein And when his daughter was decked out, he sent her in to al-Hârith And when she was brought in to him, he stayed but a little space, and came forth to me; and I said—"Hast thou prospered?" "No," said he. "How was that?" I asked He answered—"When I put forth my hand to take her, she said, "Stay! doest thou thus before my father and my brethren?"

No, by God! this is not fitting!" Then he commanded that the camels should be made ready, and we started on our way, taking her with us. And we journeyed a space, then he said to me—'Go on before:' and I went on, and he turned aside with her from the road. And he had tarried but a little when he joined me again, and I said—'Hast thou prospered?' 'No,' he answered 'Why?' said I. He answered—'She said to me— "Doest thou with me as with a woman-slave that is hawked about for sale, or a captive woman taken in battle? No, by God! until thou slay the camels, and slaughter the sheep, and call the Arabs to the feast, and do all that should be done for the like of me "' I answered—'I see that she is a woman of a high spirit and understanding, and I hope that she will be to thee a wife who shall bear thee noble sons, if God will.' And we travelled on until we came to our country. And al-Hârith made ready the camels and the sheep, and prepared a feast, then he went in to her. And in a little while he came forth to me, and I asked him—'Hast thou prospered?' 'No,' said he 'How was that?' I asked. He answered 'I went in to her and said—"Lo! I have made ready the camels and the sheep as thou seest," she answered me—"By God! I was told that thou hadst a nobleness which I do not see in thee"' "How so?" I asked. She said—"Hast thou a light heart to wed women while the Arabs are slaying one another?" "What wouldst thou have me do?" I asked. She said—"Go forth to these thy kindred, and make peace between them, then return to thy wife, and thou shalt not miss what thou desirest"' 'By God!' said I, 'a noble and wise woman' and she has spoken a goodly word!'. And he said—"Come forth with me" so we went forth, and came to the two tribes, and walked between them with peace. And the peace was made on the condition that the slain should be reckoned up, and the picee of the excess taken from that tribe which had slain more of the other. And we bore the burden of the bloodwits, and they were in all three thousand camel, which were paid in the space of three years. And we returned home with the fairest of fame, and al-Hârith went in to his wife, and she bore him sons and daughters". So said Khârijah, and these two, Khârijah and al-Hârith, are the two whom Zuhâr praises in his song.

Now while 'Abs and Dhubyân were covenanting together for peace, a thing befell that came nigh to setting them at war again. 'Abs had pitched their tents in ash-Shâribbah at a place called Katan, and near them were many tents of Dhubyân. Now there was a man of Dhubyân, Husam son of Damdam by name, whose father Dûndam had been slain in the war by 'Antarah son of Shaddâd, and his brother Haum by Ward son of Hâbis, both of the house of Ghâlib, of 'Abs, and Husam swore that he would not wash his head until he had slain Ward or some other man of the line of Ghâlib, but none knew of this oath of his. And al-Hârith son of 'Auf son of Abû Hârithah and his cousin Khârijah son of Simâ' had already taken upon themselves the burden of the picee of blood, and 'Abs and Dhubyân mixed freely together. And a man of 'Abs, of the house of

Makhzûm, came to the tent of Husain son of Damdam and entered therein. "Who art thou, O Man?" said Husain "Of 'Abs," said he; and Husain did not cease to ask his lineage until he found that he was of the house of Ghâlib; and he slew him. And news of this came to al-Hârith son of 'Auf and Harim son of Simân his cousin, and it was grievous to them. And the news came also to the men of 'Abs, and they mounted and rode in a body towards al-Hârith's tent. And when al-Hârith heard of the anger that was in their hearts, and how they purposed to slay him in reequital for the death of their brother, (for Husain son of Damdam was also of the line of Murrah, as was al-Hârith son of 'Auf,) he sent to meet them a hundred camels, and with them his son, and said to the messenger—"Say to them—'Are the camels dearer to you, or your own lives?'" And the messenger went forth to meet them, and spoke after this wise. And ar-Rabi' son of Ziyâd, who was the leader of 'Abs in that day (—for Kais son of Zuhair, their chief in the war, though he counselled the peace, yet took no part therein himself, but withdrew from his kin and went away to 'Omân, where he became a Christian and spent the remainder of his days in prayer and repentance for he said—"By God! never again can I look in the face a woman of Ghatafân for verily I have slain her father or her brother or some other dear to her")—ar-Rabi' cried to his following—"O my people! your brother has sent you this message—'Are the camels dearer to you, or will ye rather take my son and slay him in the stead of your slain?'" And they said—"We will take the camels and be reconciled, and conclude our covenant of peace" So peace was made, and al-Hârith and Harim gained the more praise.

And Žuhâr made this song to tell of the noble deeds of al-Hârith and Khârijah, and the rest of the house of Ghaudh son of Murrah for all shone in the peace-making, though the leaders therein were al-Hârith and Khârijah.

ARGUMENT.

In vv. 1-15 the poet, after the fashion of his fellows, strives to touch the hearts of his hearers, and to prepare them to receive kindly what he has to say on his real theme, by the mention of women and the deserted pasture-grounds which the tribesmen leave at the end of Spring, Umm Aufâ was his wife she bore him many children, who all died young, and one day in an angry mood he divorced her. Afterwards he repented of his deed, and pray'd her to return to him, but she would not.

Then he turns to praise the two who made the peace and bore the burden of the price of blood (vv. 16-25) After that he exhorts the two tribes (vv. 26-33) to keep faithfully their pact of peace, and after what they have known of War, to stir her not up again. Then he tells of the deed of Husain son of Damdam, how he slew his enemy while the two peoples were making ready the peace (vv. 34-39). Then by a figure he relates how the

senseless war broke out afresh, and more blood was spilt; for which again the house of Ghaidh paid from their herds, though themselves without blame (vv. 40-46).

What follows would seem to be a store of maxims of life and conduct, some of which are wanting in certain recensions of the poem, and all do not appear to be here appropriate, nevertheless many of them seem clearly to touch upon the generous deed of the Peace-makers, and to be meant to praise them and to set them as an example to men. In the last verse he warns those who heard him that though noble men may pay for misdoers once and again, the time will come when the thankless shall find none to bear the burden of his guilt.

I.

Are they of Umm Aufâ's tents—these black lines that speak no word
in the stony plain of al-Mutathallam and ad-Darrâj ?

Yea, and the place where her camp stood in ar-Rakmatân is now
like the tracery drawn afresh by the veins of the inner wrist
The wild kine roam there large-eyed, and the deer pass to and fro,
and their younglings rise up to suck from the spots where they lie all round.

I stood there and gazed. since I saw it last twenty years had flown,
and much I pondered thereon had was it to know again—

The black stones in order laid in the place where the pot was set,
and the trench like a cistern's root with its sides unbroken still.

And when I knew it at last for her resting-place, I cried—
'Good greeting to thee, O House—faït peace in the morn to thee !'

Look forth, O Friend—canst thou see aught of ladies camel-borne
that journey along the upland there above Jurthum well ?
Their litters are hung with precious stuffs, and thin veils thereon
cast loosely, their borders rose, as though they were dyed in blood.
Sideways they sat as their beasts climb the ridge of as-Sûbân [ease.

—in them were the sweetness and grace of one nourished in wealth and
They went on their way at dawn—they started before sunrise :

straight did they make for the vale of ar-Rass as hand for mouth.
Dainty and playful their mood to one who should try its worth,
and faces fair to an eye skilled to trace out loveliness.

And the tassels of scarlet wool in the spots where they gat them down
glowed red like to 'ishrit seeds, fresh-fallen, unbroken, bright.

And when they reached the wells where the deep blue water lies,
 they cast down their staves and set them to pitch the tents for rest
 On their right-hand rose al-Kanân and the rugged skirts thereof—
 and in al-Kanân how many are foes and friends of mine !
 At eve they left as-Sûbân : then they crossed its ridge again,
 borne on the fair-fashioned litters, all new and builded broad.

II

I swear by the Holy House which worshippers circle round—
 the men by whose hands it rose, of Jurhum and of Kuraish—
 How goodly are ye, our Lords, ye twain who are found by men
 good helpers in every case, be it easy to loose or hard !
 Busily wrought they for peace, those two of Ghaidh, Murrah's son,
 when the kin had been rent in twain and its friendship sunk in blood.
 Ye healed 'Abs and Dhubyâن's breach when the twain were well-nigh spent,
 and between them the deadly perfume of Manahim was working hate.
 Ye said—' If we set our hands to Peace, base it broad and firm
 by the giving of gifts and fair words of friendship, all will be well.'
 And ye steadfastly took your stand thereon in the best of steads,
 far away from unbrotherliness and the bitter result of wrong.
 Yea, glory ye gained in Ma'add, the highest—God guide you right !
 who gains without blame a treasure of glory, how great is he !
 The wounds of the kindred were healed with hundreds of camels good :
 he paid them forth troop by troop who had no part in the crime ;
 Kin paid them forth to kin as a debt due from friend to friend,
 and they spilt not between them so much as a copper's cup full of blood.
 Among them went forth, your gift, of the best of your fathers' store,
 fair spoils, young camels a many, slit-eared, of goodly breed.

III.

Ho ! carry my message true to the tribesmen together leagued
 and Dhubyâن—Have ye sworn all that ye took upon to swear ?
 It boots not to hide from God aught evil within your breasts :
 it will not be hid—what men would hold back from God, He knows.

It may be its meed comes late · in the Book is the wrong set down
 for the Reckoning Day ; it may be that vengeance is swift and stern.
 And War is not aught but what ye know well and have tasted oft :
 not of her are the tales ye tell a doubtful or idle thing.
 When ye set her on foot, ye start her with words of little praise ; [flame.
 but the mind for her grows with her growth, till she bursts into blazing
 She will grind you as grit of the mill that falls on the skin beneath ;
 year by year shall her womb conceive, and the fruit thereof shall be twins ;
 Yea, boys shall she bear you, all of ill omen, eviller
 than Ahmar of 'Ad · then suckling and weaning shall bring their gain ;
 Such harvest of bitter grain shall spring as their lords reap not
 from acres in al-'Irâk of bushels of coin and gold.

IV

Yea, verily good is the kin, and unmeet the deed of wrong
 Hussain son of Damdam wrought against them, a murder foul !
 He hid deep within his heart his bloody intent, nor told
 to any his purpose, till the moment to do was come
 He said—‘I will work my will, and then shall there gird me round
 and shield me from those I hate a thousand stout cavalry.’
 So he slew : no alarm he raised whereo the tents stood peacefully,
 though there in the midst the Vulture-mother had entered in
 To dwell with a lion fierce, a bulwark for men in fight,
 a lion with angry mane upbristled, sharp tooth and claw,
 Fearless : when one him wrongs, he sets him to vengeance straight,
 unfaltering . when no wrong lights on him, 'tis he that wrongs

V

They pastured their camels athirst, until when the time was ripe
 they drove them to pools all cloven with weapons and plashed with blood ;
 They led through their midst the Dooms . then they drove them forth again
 to the pasture rank and heavy, till then thirst should grow anew.
 But *their* lances—by thy life ! were guilty of none that fell :
 Nahâk's son died not by them, nor by them al-Muthallam's slain ;

Nor had they in Naufal's death part or share, nor by their hand
 did Wahab lie slain, nor by them fell al-Mukhazzam's son.
 Yet for each of those that died did they pay the price of blood—
 good camels unblemished that climb in a row by the upland road
 To where dwells a kin great of heart, whose word is enough to shield
 whom they shelter when peril comes in a night of fierce strife and storm;
 Yea, noble are they! the seeker of vengeance gains not from them
 the blood of his foe, nor is he that wrongs them left without help.

VI

Aweary am I of life's toil and travail he who like me
 has seen pass of years fourscore, well may he be sick of life!
 I know what To-day unfolds, what before it was Yesterday;
 but blind do I stand before the knowledge To-morrow brings.
 I have seen the Dooms trample men as a blind beast at random treads
 —whom they smote, he died whom they missed, he lived on to strength-
 Who gathers not friends by help in many a case of need [less eld.
 is torn by the blind beast's teeth, or trodden beneath its foot.
 And he who his honour shields by the doing of kindly deed
 grows richer: who shuts not the mouth of reviling, it lights on him.
 And he who is lord of wealth and is niggardly with his hoard
 alone is he left by his kin nought have they for him but blame.
 Who keeps faith, no blame he earns and that man whose heart is led
 to goodness unmixed with guile gains freedom and peace of soul
 Who trembles before the Dooms, yea, him shall they surely seize,
 albeit he set in his dread a ladder to climb the sky.
 Who spends on unworthy men his kindness with lavish hand,
 no praise does he earn, but blame, and repentance the end thereof.
 Who will not yield to the spears when their feet turn to him in peace,
 shall yield to the points thereof, and the long flashing blades of steel.
 Who holds not his foe away from his cistern with sword and spear,
 it is broken and spoiled: who uses not roughness, him shall men wrong.
 Who seeks far away from kin for housing, takes foe for friend:
 who honours himself not well, no honour gains he from men.

Who makes of his soul a beast of burden to bear men's loads,
 nor shields it one day from shame, yea, sorrow shall be his lot.
 Whatso be the shaping of mind that a man is born withal,
 though he think it lies hid from men, it shall surely one day be known.
 How many a man seemed goodly to thee while he held his peace,
 whereof thou didst learn the more or less when he turned to speech !
 The tongue is a man's one half, the other the heart within .
 besides these two nought is left but a semblance of flesh and blood.
 If a man be old and a fool, his folly is past all cure :
 but a young man may yet grow wise and cast off his foolishness.

VII

We askcd, and ye gave we asked again, and ye gave again ;
 but the end of much asking must be that no giving shall follow it.

NOTES

The traditions relating to the War of Dâhis (as it was called after the famous horse the wager in regard to which was the cause of dispute) are very full, and abound in graphic incident throwing much light on the life of those days To abridge them, or to summarize the many stories they contain (of which that given in the introduction is a fair specimen), would be to do them wrong , I hope to have some opportunity hereafter of setting them forth at length The tribes which took part in the war were, on the one side, 'Abs, and on the other that branch of Dhubyân called Fazârah other branches of Dhubyân were afterwards drawn into it, but the main struggle was between these two The combatants belonged to the great clan of Ghatafân, who dwelt in those days south of the western portion of the mountains of Tayyi and of the oasis of Taimâ, between Yathrib (or al-Madînah) on the west and the lands of the Banû Asad on the east. After accepting al-Islâm in the last years of the Prophet's life, the whole of Ghatafân, like most others of the Arab tribes, apostatised on his death, and attached themselves to one of the many pretenders to a prophetic mission who arose at that time, named Tulaihah, a man of Asad. The first of Abû Bakr's successes over the apostates was gained when he crushed opposition in Ghatafân : little blood was shed, but the whole tribe lost their pasture lands as a penalty for their apostacy Consequently they had to be provided for elsewhere after the Muslim conquest of the lands to the north of Arabia, and disappeared from their ancestral sites, where we should now search for them in vain

The War of Dâhis is said to have lasted forty years, like that of al-Basûs,

and Caussin de Perceval places its commencement at from 568 to 570 A.D., and its close from 608 to 610. It seems nearly certain, however, that the latter figures are too late. We have good reason for believing that Duraid son of as-Simmah was near a hundred years old when he was slain at Hunain in January, 630. If he was not more than ninety-five, his birth must have fallen in 535. The death of his youngest brother 'Abdallâh (see No. XXII. above) took place after the peace, for 'Abs and Fazârah acted in concert on the occasion. It seems hardly possible, looking to all the incidents of the case, that Duraid was then much over sixty-five. His mother Raihânah is said to have been still alive when 'Abdallâh was slain. If this was so, that event can hardly be placed later, or much later, than 600 A.D., so that peace must have been made by them. Kais son of Zuhair, the leader of 'Abs, was a contemporary of Hudhaifah, the leader of Fazârah. The latter was slain in the course of the war, but Kais survived till its close. Hisu, the son of Hudhaifah, was the leader of Fazârah at the peace, but when 'Abs and Dhubyân accepted al-Islâm in 629 (indeed as early as July, 627, at the raid of al-Ghâbah), another generation had passed, and 'Uyânah son of Hisu was their chief. This also would throw back the peace to near the commencement of the century. It is probable that the duration of the war has been exaggerated by tradition, and that it really lasted less than forty years. Besides the Mu'allakah of Zuhair, another of these famous poems, that of 'Antaiah of 'Abs, was composed during the war of Dâhis; other celebrated poets of 'Abs were 'Urwah son of al-Ward (see No. XVII.), al-Rabi' son of Ziyâd (who also lived right through the war from its beginning to its end, and was an old man when Labid the poet, who can hardly have been less than seventy in 632 when he became a Muslim, was still a boy), and Kais son of Zuhair the chief of the tribe. Though an-Nâbighah of Dhubyân must have been famous while the war was still in progress, we hear very little of him in connection with it. Al-Hârith son of 'Auf survived till the days of al-Islâm, and in his old age accepted the new faith. The cause of the displeasure of Aus son of Hârithah at al-Hârith's offer of marriage, as related in the introduction above, was that Aus's daughter Zainab was married to an-Nu'mân king of al-Hirah, and as father-in-law of a king he naturally looked down upon less distinguished alliances. This, again, seems to throw back the peace to a date previous to an-Nu'mân's fall (the earliest possible date of which is 602, and the latest 607), since that unfortunate prince in his despair, after his flight from al-Hirah, applied for assistance to his father-in-law's tribe of Tayyi, and was refused. It is not likely that Aus would have been so haughty if his royal son-in-law had already fallen into irretrievable disaster.

It is worthy of notice that the Mu'allakah, in vv. 40-46, seems to tell of a graver dissension having arisen out of Husain's violent deed than is admitted in the tradition given in the third paragraph of the introduction; for it would appear that the renewal of strife which followed it was the occasion when the slain men named in vv. 42 and 43 met their deaths.

The words telling of the end of Kais son of Zuhair are confirmed by the verses of a poet of 'Abs who is quoted in the *Hamâsah*, p. 223, where he says of the horses that ran in the Race of Dâhis—

“They brought to pass—so God willed—the spilling of Mâlik's blood,
and cast Kais away forlorn an exile in far ‘Omân”

vv. 1 and 2 The places named in these verses are all in the country of Ghatafân, east of the northern Hijâz al-Mutathallam is the name of a hill or down: ad-Darrâj is a high tract in its neighbourhood; and ar-Rakmatân a pair of villages, or green halting-places, in the same region not far from Yathrib (al-Madinah). The last place would seem to have abounded in trees, for it is named as a spot where the moan of doves was always to be heard. Arab women used to tattoo the insides of their wrists, and the traces of the tents—especially the trenches dug round them to receive and keep out the rain—are compared to this tracery, which is said to be “drawn afresh” by the action of the torents in scoring deeply those trenches that lay in their path, while those that did not so lie have become only faintly marked, like the veins beneath the tracery.

v. 3. “The wild kine” the *antilope desassa*, a species of bovine antelope. “The deer”: *antilope leucoryx*, the white antelope. Both of these are among the most frequently mentioned wild creatures of the desert.

v. 6. “Peace in the morn,” because the early dawn was the appropriate time for sudden attacks. See note to vv. 14–17 of No. XXIV above.

vv. 7–15. The journey described in these lines would take the wanderers along the southern skirt of the land called by Palgrave (Central and Eastern Arabia, vol. 1 chap. vi) “the Upper Kaseem”. Jurhum is a water there belonging to Muzaînah, Zuhair's own tribe. Al-Rass is still a place of some importance, and will be found marked on Palgrave's map some distance to the north of 'Oneyzah. In the days of Zuhair this country was in the possession of the Banû Asad, who were confederates of Tayyi and Ghatafân. As a protected stranger among the Banû Muâînah of Ghatafân, Zuhair would have friends among the tribe of Asad but his own tribe, the Muzaînah, not being included in the confederacy, he would have also enemies. Al-Kanâñ is a mountain in the country of Asad see No. XLIX v. 6. Tassels of scarlet wool decorated the litters in which the ladies rode; the exact nature of the plant with scarlet seeds called '*ishrik*', like most other plants of the desert, is hard to identify.

v. 16. “The Holy House” is the Ka'bah, or cubical building, in the wall of which is the famous Black Stone, at Mekkah. Jurhum is the name of a stock which ruled in Mekkah for about 300 years ending about 200 A.D. They were expelled from Mekkah and dispersed so that no memorial of them remained by an Azdite stock from al-Yaman called the Khuzâ'ah, one of the races which emigrated in consequence of the breaking of the Dam of Mârib (see notes to No. XXXII. above). The Jurhum are said

to have rebuilt the Ka'bah on the old foundations after it had been overthrown by a flood, the architect was one 'Omar al-Jârûd, whose descendants were known as the *Jadarah* or masons. The Kuzâ'ah settled in Mekkah during its occupation by the Khuzâ'ah, and gained possession of the Ka'bah in the time of Kusai, whose mother was of the race of the *Jadarah*, about 440 A.D. Kusai, in the year 450 or thereabout, caused the building erected by the Jurhum to be demolished, and rebuilt the Ka'bah on a grander scale. It was rebuilt a third time about 605 A.D., when Muhammad was 35 years of age¹. If we could take this last occasion as one of those to which Zuhair refers, it would be an important datum for fixing the time when peace was made between 'Abs and Dhubyâن, and this poem was composed. It is needless here to say anything on the subject of the ancestral sanctity of the Ka'bah, and the legends of its foundation by Abraham and his son Ishmael, as these topics will be found to be fully discussed in all lives of Muhammad. To the great bulk of the Arab race, with the exception of the Himyarites of the south and the semi-Christian tribes of the north, the Ka'bah was the national sanctuary, and the pilgrimage to it the great common rite the laws of which determined the division of the year into holy and secular months, seasons of general peace and general war. The great fair at Ukâdh, where the tribes met together every year to buy and sell, was held during the sacred season, and was the common gathering-ground where the art of song was cultivated, and the language of Arabia developed to the perfection which it had attained at this classical time. To an admixture of Jewish legend which it is now almost impossible to disentangle from the native elements, the worship followed at the sanctuary at Mekkah joined a manifold idolatry, and in its court and within the building were a multitude of images, the object of the superstitious reverence of the tribes there gathered together at the pilgrimage. The great rite of the pilgrimage was the encirclement of the "Cubical House" to which reference is here made, a rite which was also used with other sacred objects during the pagan time (see note to No. XLVII. above, "maiden circling the Pillar")

v. 19. "The perfume of Manshim" a proverbial phrase as to the exact meaning of which commentators are not agreed. Manshim is said to have been a woman at Mekkah who sold perfume. It was a custom among the Arabs, when they took an oath of special significance and force, to plunge their hands into a bowl of perfume and distribute it among those who took part in the ceremony. Several such occasions are recorded in ancient legend. One occurred at Mekkah itself in or about 490 A.D., when the sons of 'Abd-Manâf so bound themselves to maintain the privileges of their family in respect of the offices connected with the Pilgrimage. For another, see the tale of the champions of the "Day of Halimah" in the notes to No. XLVIII. above. Such an oath was followed by war to the

¹ Tabari, s. 1130 sqq.

bitter end, and so "he brayed the perfume of Manshim" became a proverb for entering upon a deadly strife

v. 22 Ma'add was the legendary forefather of all those Arabs who traced their descent from 'Adnân, whose son he was. The name is thus used to denote the Central stocks, settled for the most part in Najd and the Hijâz, as opposed to the Arabs of al-Yaman or of Yamanic origin, by whom they were bordered on the north and south. The name of Ma'add's son Nizâr is also used in the same way. Nizâr was the father of Mudar, Rabi'ah and Anmâr: the last-named and his descendants joined themselves to the people of al-Yaman; and "Rabi'ah and Mudar" is again a comprehensive term used to describe the tribes of Najd and the Hijâz.

v. 25. "Slit-eared, of goodly breed" Camels of good breed had a slit made in the ear, the portion of skin thus detached being left to hang down. Another reading of the phrase makes these camels to be the offspring of a certain *Muzannan*, the name of a notable stallion-camel whose breed was much renowned among the Arabs.

v. 26 "The tribesmen together leagued" were the tribes of Ghatafân, to which the combatants belonged, and their neighbours Tayyi and Asad. This league still subsisted in the early days of al-Islâm, and is mentioned during the campaign of Khâlid son of al-Walîd against the apostates in the Khalifate of Abû Bakr. On this solemn occasion the confederates attended at the oath-taking as a guaranteeing power.

vv. 27-28 These verses have been already referred to (notes to No. XLVII. above) as a striking indication of the presence of religious ideas resembling those of al-Islâm among the pagan Arabs before the preaching of Muhammad. For reasons into which this is not the place to enter, I regard them as a genuine portion of the poem, and no interpolation¹. The tribes to whom Zuhâr's exhortation was addressed were living in the midst of a population to which Christian and Jewish religious ideas were by no means strange. To the west and north were the flourishing Jewish colonies of Yathrib, Khaibar, and Taimâ; to their north was Kalb, almost entirely Christian, in the Dûmat-al-Jandal, and Tayyi, where Christianity had made considerable progress. That an-Nâbighah of Dhubyâن, Zuhâr's great contemporary and neighbour (he belonged to the family of Ghaidh son of Murrah, the stock of the peace-makers on this occasion), was well acquainted with the Christian faith is evident from his poem translated as No. XLVIII. above: indeed one tradition (not, however, well attested) asserts that he was actually himself a professing Christian.² We have seen

¹ When this translation was first published in January, 1878, in the Journal of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal, I argued this question at some length in opposition to the views expressed by Herr v. Kremer in a note to p. 358, vol. II of his *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalif'en*. Herr v. Kremer has since apparently changed his opinions on the subject, and would now accept these verses as genuine. See his essay *Über die Gedichte des Labyd* (Vienna, 1881), pp. 16 sqq., which I first met with after almost the whole of the contents of this book had been written.

² See Lane, s.v. *Salib*.

how Kais son of Zuhain, the chief of 'Abs, is stated to have become a Christian monk in 'Omân. To the same tribe of 'Abs belonged one of those interesting præ-Muhammadan reformers called *Hanîf*, Khâlid son of Sînân son of Ghaitîh.¹ All these things seem to afford good grounds for holding that these verses, which conform naturally and suitably to the tenor of the poem, and have no marks of being an interpolation, are genuine.

v 29 It will be remembered that *War* is feminine in Arabic. In v. 30 she is compared to a devouring flame, in v. 31 to a mill that grinds a people small, and to a she-camel bringing forth young in quick succession: in v. 32 the offspring born of her are spoken of as boys of evil omen, like the wicked leader who brought about the destruction of 'Âd, and they grow rapidly in size and strength, lastly, in v. 33 she is described as being as fruitful in deadly grain as the highly-tilled lands of the Euphrates-Tigris Delta are fruitful in golden corn. "The skin beneath" in v. 31 is the mat of leather placed underneath a mill to receive the flour.

v 32 "Ahmar of 'Âd" According to the received story embodied in the Kur'ân, Zuhâr should have said "Ahmar of Thamûd," not of 'Âd. The story will be found in *Sûrah* vii 71-77, xi 64-71, xxvi 141-158, and xxvii 46-54. The people of Thamûd, who according to the legend dwelt in the valley of Hijr, on the road northwards from Yathrib into Syria, were an ungodly race to whom a prophet named Sâlih was sent to summon them to repent. They called upon him to produce a sign of his mission, and at his bidding a gigantic she-camel issued forth from a rock. Instead of receiving this miracle humbly, they hardened themselves, and their leader Kudar, called *al-Ahmar* or "the red," slew the camel. Whereupon an earthquake overthrew them, and they were overwhelmed and destroyed in their dwellings. 'Âd, on the other hand, are located by Arab tradition in quite another part of Arabia, viz. the lands bordering the great southern desert from 'Omân to Hadramaut and al-Yaman; to them was sent Hûd, and on their disregard of his warnings the whole race, save a small remnant, were suddenly cut off (see Kur'ân, *lxxix* et seq., just before the mention of Thamûd). It is evident that we have not here a Muslim interpolation in the poem, since any such interpolator would have followed the Kur'ân and named Thamûd instead of 'Âd. Probably another version of the legend was current in the days of Zuhair, there is evidence that 'Âd was given as a name to a northern as well as a southern people, and probably it was interchangeable with Thamûd. The historical basis for the legend is believed to be the great numbers of rock-cut tombs which cover the walls of the valley of Hijr, still popularly known as *Madâim Sâlih*, "the cities of Sâlih." These are really the graves of a Nabathian (or Aramaicised Arab) people, kindred with that of Petra in Idumaea, whose historical existence is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, Ptolemy, and the *Notitia dignitatum* of 450 A.D. We do not know how

¹ Ibn Kutaibah, *Mâ'rif*, p. 30. Ibn al-Athîr, i. 150.

they came to disappear; but it may have been a consequence of the shifting of the great trade route between Asia Minor, Europe, and the Indian and Chinese East, which ruined Palmyra and greatly diminished the prosperity of al-Yaman.

v. 37. "The Vulture-Mother" is Death, or Calamity: the Arabs had many such proper names for Misfortune.

v. 40 "They pastured their camels athirst:" camels, as is well known, are able to go for a long time without water, and the Arabs have separate names for each period of abstention, from one to eight days, called "a thirsting." Naturally, the shortest period is in the greatest heat of summer, when they are taken down to drink every alternate day, as the weather gets colder the time lengthens, the longest being in the full flush of the juicy herbage of spring. Here the breaking out of the strife again after the murder committed by Husan is figured by the camels being led down again to drink at the pools. The unwholesome pasturage on which they feed in the intervals is the brooding over wrong—an image used by Kais son of Zuhair, the chief of 'Abs, in some verses on the death of Hamal son of Badr, chief of Dhubyān, his former friend—

"But the stout warrior Hamal son of Badr
wrought wrong and wrong is a surfeiting pasturage."

v. 46 This verse is in praise of 'Abs. To understand it we must consider the tribal constitution of Society in ancient Arabia, where a man's whole clan was held responsible for his doings, and liable to afford satisfaction either in blood or property. When therefore a member of the tribe involved his fellows in trouble by a violent deed against some neighbour, he wronged his own tribe, as well as that against which his crime was committed, by bringing upon them a penalty. When a tribe found one of its members so little regardful of itself and others that his membership was a burden rather than a help to it, it could divest itself formally of responsibility for him by proclaiming him an outlaw, with whom his kindred would have nothing further to do. Such a description, however, unless for the gravest possible cause, was held to be disgraceful; and 'Abs are accordingly praised because they would not give up the wrong-doer, though he brought evil upon them.

The maxims which follow, vv. 47 to 63, have already been briefly described in the "Argument" prefixed to the translation. Some of them are evidently fragments of some other poem, which have crept in here merely by reason of identity of metre and rhyme. The three fine verses, 60-62, seem consecutive in sense, though they have nothing to do with the *Mu'allakah*. The whole series is however interesting as a specimen of that sententious form of wisdom which is natural to the Semitic mind, from the Proverbs of Solomon to the present day. The fine image of the apparent purposelessness of Fate, figured by a weak-eyed camel that cannot

see where it is going, and strikes at random right and left, in vv 49-50, stands in strange juxtaposition to v 53, which seems to savour of a Kur'ânic, or perhaps Christian, doctrine, in its praise of that "peace which passeth understanding" which comes of walking in the right way (but see Labid, No. XLVII v 8, which seems to express the same idea in words which are certainly not Kur'ânic)

v 56 relates to a custom of those days: when two parties of men met, if they meant peace, they turned towards each other the iron feet of their spears: if they meant war, they turned towards each other the points

In v. 57 the "cistern" is a man's home and family, and whatever he holds dear

v. 62 The Arabs used to say that the worth of a man depended on his two smallest things—his heart and his tongue.

In the translation given above greater liberties have been taken with the metre generally followed (*Tawîl*) than elsewhere in this collection. It seemed to the translator that in a long poem like this too close an adherence to a uniform measure—especially where accent has to do duty for the original quantity of the Arabic—would be wearisome; and he therefore permitted himself a movement which, while preserving the general features of the *Tawîl*, allows more variety of phrase. Perhaps he may refer to the poem entitled "Muleykeh" in Mr. Browning's second series of "Dramatic Idylls" as evidence that such a compromise, in the hands of a master, is capable of affording excellent results in our language.

APPENDIX.

THE present volume is not intended for specialists; but as it may come into the hands of some such, and as the translator hopes that it may be the means of turning the attention of some students in other fields of Arabic literature to the old poetry and the collections of traditions which illustrate it, he has indicated here the original sources from which the poems translated have been derived, and, where it seemed necessary, the authorities from which the information contained in the notes has been compiled.

The edition of the *Hamâsah* used is that by Freytag, with at-Tibrizi's commentary, and a Latin translation of the whole work (2 vols Bonn, 1828-1847). That of the *Aghâni* is the Bûlâk edition, of 1285 H., in 20 vols. The *Kâmil* of Ibn al-Athîr, the *Proverbs* of al-Mandâni, and the *Ihd* of Ibn 'Abd-Rabbîhi, have also been referred to in the Bûlâk editions. The *Proverbs* of al-Mufaddal have been consulted in the Constantinople edition of 1300 H. The edition of at-Tabâri's history used is that now in progress at Leiden.

No. I. Hamâsah, pp. 3-8: probably post-islamic (see v. 7).

No. II. Ham pp. 639-640. probably pîre islamic. For Muhriz see Aghâni, xv. 77 (his verses on al-Kulâb), and Noldke, Beitrage zur Kenntniss d. Poes'd. alt. Araber, p. 128 (his contest with Mâlik b. Nuwairah).

No. III. Ham 9-12. The brief notice of the War of al-Basûs is chiefly taken from al-Mandâni, i. 330-332, supplemented here and there from Ham, Comm. 251-255 and 420-423. Pîre-islamic.

No. IV. Ham 12-17. Post-islamic.

No. V. Ham. 19-21. Post-islamic. The translation substitutes for the first verse as given by Abû Tammâm, the version contained in the Aghâni, xi. 148, the reasons for preferring which have been stated in the Journal of the Asiat. Soc. of Bengal for 1877, where this translation first appeared.

No. VI. Ham 22–26 Post-islamic.

No. VII. Ham 26. Post-islamic

No. VIII. Ham. 33–37. Prä-islamic.

No. IX. Ham 41–43. Prä-islamic.

No X. Ham 44 For Katari, see the long account of the *Khawârij* in the *Kâmil* of al-Mubarrad, pp 623 sqq. The dates given in the notes are from Ibn al-Athîr.

No XI. Ham. 45–42. Prä-islamic

No XII. Ham 49–54, under the name of as-Samau’al, but this is an evident mistake, as admitted by at-Tibrîzî himself (p. 51, line 5), due to a misinterpretation of v. 6. For the visit of the Hâritîs to the Prophet in A.H. 9, see Agh x 143–4 Post-islamic.

No XIII. Ham p 100 For particulars regarding al-Fadl b. al-‘Abbâs, see Agh. xv 2. Post-islamic.

No. XIV. Ham pp 125–126 Post-islamic. An account of the discovery of this poem, by a scholar who went to the Desert to gather fragments of ancient poetry, is given in the *Muzhū*, n 158–9

No. XV. Ham pp 140–141. Post-islamic. The particulars regarding the author given in the notes have been gathered from the *Kâmil* of al-Mubarrad (see index to that work). The verses translated in the commentary are from the *Kâmil*, p 715

No XVI. Ham. 141–143 Post-islamic

No XVII. Ham 207–209 Prä-islamic For ‘Urwah, see Agh n 190, Prof Nöldeke’s edition of his poems, and the Cano collection of Five Diwâns (an-Nâbighah, ‘Alkamah, ‘Uïwah, Hâtum at-Tâl, and al-Farazdak)

No XVIII. Ham 248–251 Prä-islamic

No XIX. Ham 367–8 Post-islamic For Qâs b. ‘Âsim, see Agh xii. 149 sqq

No XX. Ham. 370 Post-islamic For the history of Mâlik, see Nöldeke, Beiträge, pp 87 sqq., Agh xiv 66 sqq and Ibn al-Athîr, n. 149

No XXI. Ham. 375 Probably Prä-islamic, last verse quoted in ‘Iqd, i 220

No XXII. Ham. 377–380 Prä-islamic. The story of the death of ‘Abdallâh is rendered from Agh ix 3–4

No XXIII. Ham 380–382 The traditions about Duraid are from Aghânt, ix. 2 sqq. That telling of the encounter with Rabi’ah is from Agh xiv 184 sqq., corrected by reference to ‘Iqd, iii 76–77. Prä-islamic.

No XXIV. Ham 382–386 If genuine, Prä-islamic: on the question of its genuineness see the remarks in J A S B. 1877, where this translation first appeared. In Agh v 171 the last verse but one is quoted, and the poem attributed to ash-Shanfard.

No. XXV. Ham 404–5. Post islamic.

No. XXVI. Ham 405. Post-islamic.

No. XXVII. Ham 409–410. Post-islamic.

No. XXVIII. Ham. 410–412. Prä-islamic. The account of Rabi’ah’s

death is generally based upon Abū Riyāsh, as given by at-Tibrīzī, but a few additions have been made from Agh. xv 130; see also al-Mādānī, i. 195

No. XXIX Ham 414-15 P̄se-islamic The order of lines 5 to 10 in the translation is that which they bear in al-Marzūkī's edition of the Ham., which, as observed by Freytag (Lat. translation, vol. ii p. 95, bottom) gives a much better succession than that exhibited by at-Tibrīzī. The particulars regarding as Sulaik are from Agh. xviii 133 sqq.

No. XXX Post-islamic, quoted in at-Tibrīzī's commentary to Ham. p. 247, bottom. What professes to be the entire poem by Mâlik from which the lines are taken will be found in the 'Ikd, ii 10-11. This contains 21 verses, but as, according to Abū 'Ubaydah (Agh. xxx 169), the original had only 13, the remaining 8 must be spurious. Another still longer version is to be found in the *Jamhārah ash-'ar al-Arab* (Br. Mus. Codd. Or. 415, and Add. 19,403), where it is the last of the *Mardhī*.

No. XXXI Ham 504 P̄se-islamic For 'Amr, see Agh. xvi. 163.

No. XXXII Ham 506-7 P̄se-islamic

No. XXXIII. Ham 530 Probably p̄se-islamic

No. XXXIV Ham 541-2 P̄se-islamic.

No. XXXV Ham 544 Post-islamic

No. XXXVI Ham 548 Age unknown

No. XXXVII Ham 551 Probably post-islamic

No. XXXVIII. Ham 563 P̄se-islamic.

No. XXXIX Ham 566 Post-islamic.

No. XL Ham 571-5 Age unknown

No. XLI Ham 575 Probably post-islamic.

No. XLII Ham 576 Post-islamic For Taubah see Agh. x 67 sqq.

No. XLIII. Ham 577 Post-islamic For Nusaib see Agh. i 129 sqq.

No. XLIV Ham 632 P̄se-islamic Notes from Proverbs of al-Mufaddal,
pp. 82 sqq.

No. XLV. from the *Mufaddaliyāt*, Codd. Br. Mus. Add. 7533, fol. 29 verso. While this book has been passing through the press, Part I of Prof. H. Thorbecke's edition of the *Mufaddaliyāt* has appeared, in which these verses will be found at pp. 23, 24. I have to acknowledge his kindness in permitting me to see a proof of these pages in advance of publication.

No. XLVI. From the *Mufaddaliyāt* as above, fol. 51 verso. Other readings of this poem will be found in Agh. xv 75-6, Ibn al-Athir, i. 262, and 'Ikd, iii. 100-1. The introduction is from the Aghānī, xv 73, sqq. The account of the Day of as-Safkah is from Tabarī, i. 984 sqq., supplemented and corrected from Agh. xvi. 78 sqq.

No. XLVII. From the *Diwān* of Labid, al-Khālidī's edition, Vienna, 1880, pp. 10-15, collated with Leiden MSS. Ar. No. 2024. The reading *Duwdr* in v. 13 is adopted from the latter; it is given as a variant in the notes to al-Khālidī's edition.

No. XLVIII. From an-Nābighah's *Diwān* in Ahlwardt's Six Poets,

pp. 2-3. Cairo edition, pp. 2-9. The notes are chiefly from Agh. ix. p. 162 sqq. For the Day of Halimah, see al-Masdâni, n. 189, al-Mufaddal, 79. Ibn al-Athir, i. 222-26, etc.

No. XLIX. From Imra-al-Kais's Mu'allakah, vv. 70-81 (text of Arnold, collated with at-Tibâzi, MS Camb Univ Lib No. 212). The details of Imra-al-Kais's life are chiefly from Agh. viii. 62 sqq.

No. L. The Mu'allakah of Zuhair. The text is that of Arnold. The Introduction is taken from Agh. ix. 149-50, 148-9, etc. The best account of the War of Dâhis is in al-Mufaddal's Proverbs, pp. 26-44: but the subject is very fully treated in the Aghâni, xvi. 20 sqq., 'Ikâd, iii. 67 sqq. See the original notes to this translation in J.A.S.B. 1878, p. 1-26.

INDEX.

A.—PROPER NAMES.

N B.—In this index the article (*al-*, the *l* of which is assimilated to the following consonant before *d*, *dh*, *d*, *dh*, *n*, *r*, *s*, *sh*, *s*, *t*, *th*, *f*, and *z*) is not reckoned in the alphabetical arrangement. Such names as *al-Hârith*, *an-Nâbighah*, and *ash-Shanfâ'â* should therefore be looked for under the letters H, N, and S respectively.

The letter *b* with a man's name stands for *ibn*, son, and with a woman's name for *bint*, daughter. With tribal names its plural, *banâ'*, sons, is used.

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